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ABSTRACT

Community schools are state-funded public schools, exempt from various rules and regulations in exchange for increased accountability or student performance. This Legislative Office of Education Oversight (LOEO) report examines Ohio's first 15 community schools that began during the 1998-99 school year. All 15 schools were successful about opening, completing a full school year, and continuing into a second year; however, many had delays in their funding. LOEO anticipates that community schools will require substantial and continuing technical assistance, and the Ohio Department of Education will need to meet the unique needs of community schools as it provides technical assistance. Community schools are contractually held accountable for the academic performance of their students with their sponsors; however, information regarding accountability in their annual reports was lacking. LOEO recommends that community schools become familiar with and adhere to the community school law and contractual agreements regarding accountability. It also recommends that community-school sponsors become familiar with community-school law and hold community schools responsible for accountability measures. Appendixes contain material concerning community-school contracts, profiles of the schools, exempt and nonexempt laws, and statistical information. (Contains 100 references.) (DFR)

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Community Schools in Ohio: First-Year Implementation Report

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The Legislative Office of Education Oversight (LOEO) serves as staff to the Legislative Committee on Education Oversight. Created by the Ohio General Assembly in 1989, the Office evaluates education-related activities funded by the state of Ohio. This LOEO report examines the key characteristics of Ohio's first 15 community schools and describes the challenges and successes that they experienced during their first year of operation. *Conclusions and recommendations in this report are those of the LOEO staff and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Committee or its members.*

This report is available at LOEO's web site : http://www.loeo.state.oh.us

Summary

Community Schools in Ohio: First-Year Implementation Report

Background

Over the last ten years, "school choice" has grown in popularity across the nation because of growing dissatisfaction with traditional public schools. School choice allows parents and students to leave the public school to which they have been assigned and "choose" a school that they believe better meets their needs. Charter schools, called "community schools" in Ohio, are one of several types of "choice" options that are available to parents and students.

Community schools are state-funded public schools that are exempt from various rules and regulations in exchange for increased accountability for student performance.

The Legislative Office of Education Oversight (LOEO) is required by law to evaluate community schools in Ohio. Over a five-year period, LOEO will describe community schools, evaluate their implementation, and assess their impact on student achievement. LOEO also will assess the impact that these schools have on traditional public schools and on the state's elementary and secondary education system as a whole.

Community schools are state-funded public schools. What makes them different from traditional public schools is that they are exempt from many of the rules and regulations that traditional public schools must follow. In exchange for fewer rules and regulations, community schools are accountable for the academic performance of their students. The exact nature of this agreement is formalized in a contract between the community school and its sponsor.

This LOEO report examines Ohio's first 15 community schools, those that began during the 1998-1999 school year.

There are 48 community schools operating in Ohio during the 1999-2000 school year. However, this first-year implementation report examines the community school initiative in Ohio through the experiences of only the first 15 community schools, those that began during the 1998-1999 school year and have been in operation more than one year.

Ohio's First 15 Community Schools

All 15 community schools are located in six of Ohio's largest urban centers. These are "start-up" schools and have not been "converted" from an existing public school.

Of the first 15 community schools, ten were sponsored by the State Board of Education and five were sponsored by the Lucas County Educational Service Center. (A detailed profile of each school is in the appendices of the full report.)

Most community school founders started their schools in response to what they saw as deficiencies in the traditional public school system.

Most community school founders say they started their school in response to what they saw as deficiencies in the ability of the public school system to meet student needs. Three community schools were created specifically to provide a supportive learning environment for children with special needs (autism, behavioral and learning disabilities, and adjudicated youth).

Community schools are mostly elementary schools and serve fewer than 100 students.

In general, community schools are smaller in size (less than 100 students) and serve a higher proportion of elementary school students than their corresponding city school districts.

Student characteristics

Overall, community schools enroll a higher proportion of minority and poor students, serve fewer special needs students, and have attendance rates that compare favorably to corresponding city school districts.

Overall, the 15 community schools enrolled a higher proportion of African American students than their city district counterparts. For the 1998-1999 school year, 82% of community school students were African American, compared to 63% in corresponding city districts. LOEO also found that most community schools enroll a greater proportion of students in poverty than their corresponding city school district.

Community schools educate a smaller percentage of special needs students than their city school district counterparts. Only 6% of community school students were reported as having a disability requiring an Individualized Education Program (IEP), compared to 13% of all corresponding city school districts.

The attendance rate for all community school students during the 1998-1999 school year ranged from 90% to 95%, averaging 94%. This compares favorably to their city school district counterparts where attendance ranged from 86% to 91% during the same school year.

Teacher characteristics

LOEO found that the years of teaching experience and the salaries of community school teachers were considerably lower than their colleagues in the city districts. On average, community school teachers had 4.2 years of teaching experience compared to 14.8 years for teachers in the corresponding city school districts. The annual salary of community school teachers paralleled their relative inexperience. An average teacher in a community school earned $22,070 during the 1998-1999 school year. In contrast, a teacher in the corresponding city school districts earned an average of $43,162.

On average, community school teachers have fewer years experience and have significantly lower salaries than teachers in corresponding city school districts.

LOEO Findings and Recommendations

LOEO found that, despite many obstacles, Ohio's first 15 community schools were successful at opening their doors to students, completing a full school year, and continuing into a second year. These schools struggled, however, with delayed funding, acquiring facilities, technical assistance, and transportation problems. LOEO also found that community schools had difficulty preparing their first-year annual reports. These annual reports are currently the primary method for holding the schools accountable.

Ohio's first 15 community schools were successful at opening their doors to students, completing a full school year, and continuing into a second year.

Funding

Even though all 15 community schools remain financially solvent, many encountered problems receiving timely state and federal funding. State funds for special education and disadvantaged students and federal start-up funds were not dispersed until spring of the 1998-1999 school year. Other federal funding did not arrive until September of the following school year.

Community schools experienced delays in their state and federal funding.

LOEO found that the funding problems that existed during the 1998-1999 school year have been resolved through changes in legislation and improved practices by the Ohio Department of Education.

Facilities

Acquiring a facility was not a significant problem for those community schools that were either managed by a private company or affiliated with a well-established service provider located in the community. However, for the one-third of community schools not affiliated with such groups, acquiring a facility was a substantial challenge.

One-third of the first 15 community schools had difficulties finding a facility.

The difficulties that Ohio community schools had in securing a facility mirror those in other states. These difficulties result from an inadequate supply of suitable school facilities and reluctance on the part of building owners to sign leases with entities that lack experience.

Although five of the first 15 community schools that opened during the 1998-1999 school year experienced difficulties in finding a facility, they managed to open their doors. However, at least ten other new community schools postponed opening for the 1999-2000 school year due to facility problems. LOEO expects that facilities will be an ongoing concern for the community schools initiative.

Technical assistance

Almost all community schools have come to realize that they need a significant amount of assistance in learning to open and operate a public school. Both the Ohio Department of Education and the Lucas County Educational Service Center offered technical assistance to community schools during the first year of operation.

LOEO anticipates that community schools will require substantial and continuing technical assistance.

LOEO found that the community schools in Lucas County rated the technical assistance of the Lucas County Educational Service Center favorably. However, most of the 15 community schools were dissatisfied with the technical assistance provided by the Ohio Department of Education (ODE) during the 1998-1999 school year.

The Ohio Department of Education's poor technical assistance stemmed from being understaffed and unprepared to accommodate the unique characteristics of community schools. Even though most community schools believe that ODE has improved its technical assistance during the 1999-2000 school year, LOEO anticipates that ODE will need to continue adapting to the unique needs of community schools.

LOEO anticipates that community schools are likely to require substantial and continuing technical assistance in:

- Acquiring facilities;
- Submitting EMIS information;
- Preparing annual reports;
- Submitting required financial statements;
- Understanding legal liabilities;
- Providing special education;
- Acquiring additional state and federal funds;
- Developing curricula; and
- Aligning educational goals, instructional strategies, and assessment approaches in ways that demonstrate public accountability.

ODE will need to continue adapting to the unique needs of community schools as it provides technical assistance.

Transportation

Both community schools and traditional school districts are impacted by problems associated with transporting community school students.

Under Ohio's community school law, school districts are legally responsible for transporting community school students. However, for the majority of community schools, transportation was a major issue that affected their day-to-day operations. Specific problems cited by community school administrators included:

- Delays in the routing and transportation of students;
- Absence of yellow bus transportation (public transit bus passes instead);
- Changes in the school day to accommodate school district bus services;
- Overcrowding of buses;
- Paying for transportation services without state reimbursement; and
- Students withdrawing from the community schools because of non-existent or inadequate transportation.

These transportation problems have contributed to the strained relationship between community and traditional public schools.

While community schools argued that school districts were not meeting their legal obligation in providing transportation, school districts argued that they lacked adequate funding to purchase the buses and service the routes necessary to transport community school students.

Another point of contention between community schools and traditional school districts is the vagueness of the law itself, which fails to clearly delineate responsibilities for the transportation of community school students with disabilities.

The transportation problems expressed by both community schools and traditional public school districts need to be resolved immediately.

These transportation issues have contributed to the strained relationship between community and traditional public schools and are likely to become more contentious as additional community schools open in the future. Furthermore, community schools risk losing current and future students due to a lack of adequate transportation.

Finally, more state-level data are needed to assess the costs associated with transporting community school students. Currently, information about community school students is aggregated along with that of traditional public school students, making it difficult to assess the cost of this separate group of students.

Therefore, LOEO recommends that the Ohio General Assembly:

- Provide a timely remedy to address the transportation problems expressed by both community schools and traditional public school districts. LOEO offers some options for the General Assembly to consider.

LOEO recommends that the Ohio Department of Education:

- Require school districts to report transportation data separately for community school students.

Community schools are held accountable for the academic performance of their students as part of the contracts with their sponsors.

Accountability

One of the central tenets of the community school initiative is greater autonomy (fewer rules and regulations) in exchange for greater accountability. Community schools have accepted the challenge of being held accountable for the academic performance of their students as part of the contracts with their sponsors.

Ohio law requires community schools to provide annual reports with information on their educational activities, their financial status, and documentation of their progress toward meeting the academic goals and performance standards outlined in their contracts.

Community schools did not provide the necessary information in their annual reports to be held accountable.

Based on its review of the first-year annual reports, LOEO found that community schools did not provide the information necessary for accountability purposes. Although schools claimed that they met their educational goals, few schools provided supporting evidence or even described how they evaluated student and school performance.

In addition, there is little evidence that most community schools assessed the satisfaction of parents as promised, nor did they send parents the annual reports as required by law.

Both community school directors and sponsors seemed unfamiliar with their responsibilities regarding annual reports.

Most school founders and directors were unfamiliar with their responsibilities for annual reports as stated in the community school law and their contracts. Furthermore, community school sponsors appeared equally unfamiliar with these responsibilities and provided little assistance and oversight in the preparation of the annual reports.

LOEO recognizes that these are the first annual reports produced by community schools. However, community schools and their sponsors need to improve the quality of these reports in order to meet their contractual agreements and for the reports to be used for accountability purposes.

Therefore, LOEO recommends that community schools:

- Become familiar with and adhere to the community school law and contractual agreements regarding accountability.
- Develop a strategy for measuring and providing clear evidence of the extent to which their stated educational goals and student outcomes are accomplished.
- Assess parent satisfaction and develop strategies to gather and analyze feedback from parents, when they have contractually promised to do so.

LOEO recommends that community school sponsors:

- Become familiar with community school law and hold community schools responsible for accountability measures.
- Provide clearly written guidelines to each community school for annual reports, including expectations of content and deadlines for completion and dissemination.
- Expect clearly stated performance standards from each community school upon which the sponsor will evaluate the success of the school.

Community Schools in Ohio:
First-Year Implementation Report

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COMMENTS

Chapter I
Introduction

This Legislative Office of Education Oversight (LOEO) report describes the first 15 community schools in Ohio, identifies the challenges and successes they experienced during their first year of operation, and offers recommendations on implementation issues that need to be addressed.

Choice programs

Over the last ten years, "school choice" has grown in popularity across the nation because of growing dissatisfaction with public schools. The primary purpose of school choice is to allow parents and students to leave the public school to which they have been assigned and "choose" a school that they believe better meets their needs. "School choice" is also viewed as a promising school reform strategy, creating what some believe is the necessary "competition" to force traditional public schools to improve.

There are several types of "choice" options available to parents and students. These options include inter- and intra-district open enrollment, magnet schools, charter schools, and school vouchers. For open enrollment and magnet schools, parent and student choices are restricted to existing public schools. Charter schools and vouchers, on the other hand, allow students to attend schools outside of the traditional public school system.

Since charter schools are public schools, the public funding that supports them remains in the public school system. To some, this feature makes charter schools more acceptable than voucher programs, where public funds can be spent on a private school education.

Charter schools

Charter schools are state-funded public schools. What makes them different from traditional public schools is that they are exempt from many of the rules and regulations that traditional public schools must follow. In exchange for fewer rules and regulations, charter schools are accountable for the academic performance of their students. The exact nature of this agreement is formalized in a contract between the charter school and its sponsor.

With fewer rules and regulations, proponents also believe charter schools have the flexibility to offer students more innovative teaching and learning environments. These schools see themselves as having advantages over traditional public schools with their capacity to:

- Meet students' special needs (e.g., drop-outs or autistic children);
- Tailor teaching and learning techniques to the individual abilities of each child (e.g., mentoring or low student to staff ratios);
- Offer educational options best suited to certain student populations (e.g., specialized technologies, "back to basics," or creative expression); and

- Apply different pedagogical approaches (e.g., targeting multiple intelligences or ungraded, multi-aged classrooms).

A basic idea behind the charter school movement is that anyone with a good idea, or with a unique insight into teaching and learning, is able to translate their ideas into a school. Nationally, founders of charter schools have included parents, teachers, school administrators, engineers, scientists, business leaders, etc.

In 1991, Minnesota became the first state to enact charter school legislation. Since then, 37 states, including the District of Columbia, have passed charter school laws. According to the Center for Education Reform, there are 1,682 charter schools operating in 32 states for the 1999-2000 school year. Exhibit 1 illustrates how the number of charter schools has grown nationally since 1992, when the first charter schools opened.

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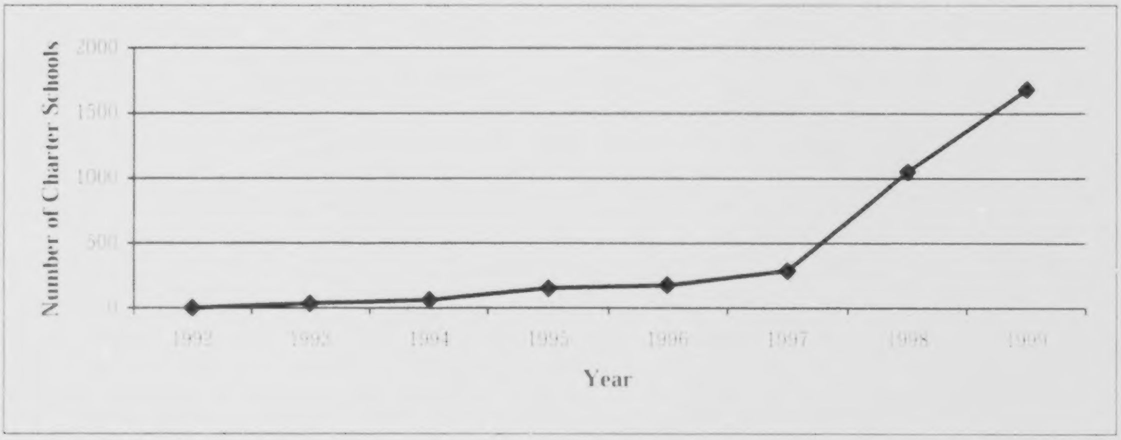
Exhibit 1
Growth in Charter Schools Nationally



Ohio. In 1997, Ohio joined the growing number of states that allow charter schools. Charter schools are called "community schools" in Ohio to avoid confusion with private schools that operate under charters issued by the State Board of Education. Two types of community schools can be created in Ohio: "start-up" schools that are newly created; or "conversion" schools composed of a classroom, a wing of a building, or an entire public school that has been transformed into a community school. There are 48 community schools operating in Ohio during the 1999-2000 school year.

LOEO reports

The Legislative Office of Education Oversight (LOEO) is required by law to conduct a series of evaluations of start-up and conversion community schools. Over a five-year period, LOEO will describe community schools, evaluate their implementation, and assess their impact on student achievement. LOEO also will assess the impact that these schools have on traditional public schools and on the state's elementary and secondary education system as a whole.

Scope of *this* report. This first-year report examines the community school initiative in Ohio through the experiences of the first 15 community schools, those that have been in operation for more than an entire school year. It describes these schools in terms of their sponsors, missions, students, teachers, and governance structures. It also describes the factors that have either hindered or facilitated their opening and day-to-day operation.

This report also offers a limited number of recommendations for improving community schools and the environment in which they operate. All recommendations are made with the recognition that the community schools under study have only been in operation for a year and a half and continue to struggle with a myriad of tasks necessary to starting a new school.

Given that community schools are in their infancy, using this first-year implementation report to draw conclusions about the worth of individual community schools or the initiative as a whole is premature.

Scope of *future* LOEO reports. Four subsequent LOEO reports will: describe the similarities and differences between community schools and other public schools; assess the impact of community schools on the academic performance of their students; determine the impact of community schools on students, teachers and parents; and examine the impact of community schools on the public school system at large. LOEO will make recommendations as to the future of community schools in Ohio in its final report to be issued in 2003.

LOEO methods

To complete this report on the first year implementation of community schools, LOEO used the following research methods:

Visits, interviews, and observations. From August, 1998 through November, 1999, LOEO staff made at least two visits to each of the 15 community schools. First, LOEO conducted extensive on-site interviews with directors, founders, or board members of each of these schools. A second set of visits to selected schools involved informal classroom observations and additional questions with the director and teachers. A third round of site visits to all schools was conducted in the fall of 1999 and included in-depth interviews with 48 teachers, followed by formal classroom observations.

In addition, LOEO interviewed representatives from the following:

- Ohio Department of Education (ODE) divisions and offices, including Assessment and Evaluation, Child Nutrition, Policy Research and Analysis, Office of School Options, Special Education, Information Management Systems, Federal Assistance, and School Finance;
- Lucas County Educational Service Center (LCESC);
- Ohio Community Schools Center (OCSC);
- Ohio Auditor of State (AOS);
- Members of the Ohio General Assembly;

- Riverside Publishing Company (Ohio Proficiency Test developer); and
- Administrators and board members in four of the eight largest school districts in Ohio.

Analysis of community school contracts and annual reports. Contracts are signed agreements between an individual community school and its sponsor. These contracts state the conditions under which community schools come into existence and by which they operate. Information from these contracts were analyzed and summarized to help describe the 15 community schools and to explore similarities and differences among them.

Each of the 15 community schools is required by law and by contract to submit an annual report to their sponsor, to parents, and to LOEO. Although the style, content, and interpretability of these reports varied widely, the first year annual reports were summarized and used in preparing school profiles.

Analysis of EMIS data. LOEO analyzed fiscal year 1999 student, staff, and financial data from community schools and their corresponding city school districts as submitted via the Education Management Information System (EMIS).

Analysis of newspaper articles and press releases. From June, 1998 through September, 1999, LOEO staff identified over 150 newspaper articles and press releases pertaining to community schools and the corresponding city school districts. These articles provided valuable insight into the problems community schools were experiencing in their first year and how various constituencies perceived them.

Review of the literature. Over 100 documents were reviewed regarding charter school laws and educational policies in various states. See Appendix A for a selected bibliography.

Chapter II
The Origins of Community Schools in Ohio

This chapter describes the evolution of Ohio's community school initiative, the legislative expectations for community schools, the laws that the schools must follow, and the various ways they are held accountable.

Legislative history

Ohio law allows for both "start up" and conversion community schools. From its inception, this school choice initiative allowed conversion schools in any district in the state. Start-up schools, however, initially were limited to Lucas County under the provisions of a five-year pilot program. As of 1999, start-up community schools were allowed in any of the state's largest 21 urban school districts and in any district rated by district report cards as being in "academic emergency." Exhibit 2 summarizes the evolution of Ohio's community school initiative since it was first authorized in Am. Sub. H.B. 215 in June, 1997.

Exhibit 2
Community School Legislation Timeline

Year	Legislation	Significant Community School Events
1997	**Am. Sub. H.B. 215 (June, 1997)** • Established "pilot" community school program in Lucas County. • Community school contracts in Lucas County not allowed to extend beyond 2003. • Allowed any district in the state to convert a classroom, a wing, or an entire school building into a community school called "conversion" schools. • Conversion schools are permanent so long as their contracts are renewed (every one to five years). **Am. Sub. S.B. 55 (August, 1997)** • Permitted start-up community schools in any "Big 8" district.	• Application process began for schools seeking sponsorship from Lucas County Educational Service Center and State Board of Education.
1998	**Am. Sub. H.B. 770 (June, 1998)** • Made minor changes regarding special education, DPIA, and all-day kindergarten funding for community school students.	• Ten community schools began operating in six of the "Big 8" districts. • Five community schools began in Lucas County.

1999	**Am. Sub. H.B. 282 (June, 1999)**
	• Lucas County "pilot" program was made permanent, allowing the community schools initiative to continue in Lucas County beyond 2003, although individual community schools are subject to their original contract length.
	• Community school initiative expanded to allow start-up community schools in:
	  • any of the 21 largest urban districts in the state; and
	  • any district determined to be in "academic emergency."
	• The Office of School Options was established within ODE to provide statewide technical assistance to community schools.
		• 15 community schools began their second year of operation with the start of the 1999-2000 school year.
		• 33 new community schools began operating in 1999-2000 school year
		• 48 community schools now operating with enrollments of about 8,700 students (compared to about 2,300 students at the beginning of the 1998-1999 school year).

Legislative expectations for community schools

The Ohio General Assembly authorized the creation of community schools to provide parents with additional educational options for their children and to develop innovative teaching and management techniques that might be transferable to traditional public schools. In addition, some members of the Ohio General Assembly hoped that the competition for students caused by the emergence of community schools would encourage traditional public schools to work harder at raising student achievement.

The legislator who first proposed the creation of community schools in Ohio expected the schools to offer more educational opportunities for a greater number of students. Although this legislator expected community schools to perform better than traditional public schools, she acknowledged that the student populations in many of these community schools would probably be generally lower performing.

It is likely that some legislators expect community schools to be a strong reform effort in Ohio for some time to come. Other legislators expect to evaluate community schools' performance over the next five years before deciding on their future.

The "public" nature of community schools

Even though community schools are exempt from many of the rules and regulations embedded in traditional public education, these schools are defined in law as public schools. Community schools differ from traditional public schools; however, these differences do *not* make community schools "quasi-public." Community school students are "public" school students and community school teachers are "public" school teachers.

Ohio laws regulating community schools

Chapter 3314 of the Ohio Revised Code pertains to the creation, governance, management, and funding of community schools.

Sponsors. Only a local board of education may sponsor a conversion community school. However, six entities are eligible to sponsor start-up community schools:

1. The State Board of Education;

2. The Lucas County Educational Service Center (LCESC) – if the community school is proposed in Lucas County;

3. The University of Toledo – if the community school is proposed in Lucas County;

4. The board of education of the school district in which the community school is proposed to be located;

5. The board of education of any other city, local, or exempted village school district having territory in the same county where the district in which the community school is proposed to be located has a major portion of its territory; and

6. The board of education of any Joint Vocational School District (JVSD) with territory in the county where the district in which the community school is proposed to be located has a major portion of its territory.

An individual or group proposing either a conversion or start-up community school must first enter into a preliminary agreement with an authorized sponsor (e.g., State Board of Education, school board of local district, etc.). Once a preliminary agreement is signed, the proposing person or group establishes a governing authority for the community school and negotiates a contract with its sponsor. A majority vote of the sponsoring entity and a majority vote of the members of the governing authority of the community school are required to adopt a contract.

The number of community schools that may operate. Ohio law does not limit the number of community schools sponsored by the Lucas County Educational Service Center, the University of Toledo, or local boards of education. However, for areas outside of Lucas County, the State Board of Education is limited to sponsoring no more than 75 contracts for fiscal year 2000 and no more than 125 contracts in fiscal year 2001. The General Assembly intends to reconsider the cap on State Board of Education sponsored community schools after July 1, 2001, following its examination of LOEO's studies on community schools.

Teacher qualifications. Classroom teachers employed by a community school must hold the appropriate Ohio licensure; except that a community school may employee non-certificated persons to teach up to 12 hours per week. The same "12 hour exception" already exists in traditional public schools. A community school must detail in its contract the qualifications of its teachers and agree that the school's classroom teachers are licensed according to state standards.

Collective bargaining. In the case of conversion community schools, existing public school employees may remain part of the collective bargaining unit they were in prior to conversion, form a new unit, or petition not to have a collective bargaining unit. Teachers in start-up community schools are free to form a new collective bargaining unit should they so desire.

Admission policy for community school students. Community schools may not discriminate in the admission of students based on race, sex, religion, handicapping condition, intellectual ability, or athletic ability. A community school may, however, limit student admission to particular grade levels or age groups.

A school may also choose to serve only students defined as "at-risk" or residents of a specific geographic area within the district, which must be defined in the community school's contract. Depending on the enrollment policy specified in the community school's contract, the school may enroll students who reside outside the school district in which the school is located, which resembles inter-district open enrollment.

By law, these schools may not enroll a number of students that exceeds the capacity of the school's programs, classes, grade levels, or facilities. If the number of student applications exceeds the school's capacity, students are supposed to be admitted via a lottery system. The only student preferences may be for students who attended the school during the previous year, siblings of the students who attended the school during the previous year, and students who reside in the district in which the school is located. (This last preference assumes open enrollment.)

Provisions of a community school contract. Community school contracts may differ in their format and organization. However, there are 31 components that must be specified in the contract. (For a detailed list of these requirements, see Appendix B.) Highlights of these components include:

- The length of the contract (which may not exceed five years), and a description of and location of the facilities to be used by the school.

- A detailed description of the school's educational programming – including the school's mission, focus of the curriculum, and the types, ages, and grades of the students in the school. The school must agree to provide a minimum of 920 hours of instruction to a minimum of 25 students per school year.

- A list of the academic goals to be achieved and the methods of measurement that will be used to determine progress toward those goals, which must include the Ohio Proficiency Tests. Furthermore, the contract must specify the performance standards by which the success of the school will be evaluated by the sponsor.

- A detailed financial plan that estimates the school's budget and per-pupil expenditures for each year of the contract.

- The community school must be established as a nonprofit corporation and its governing authority clearly stated in its contract. However, the law does not preclude a for-profit company from managing the school. The school must specify such management arrangements in its contract.

Community schools accountability

One of the central tenets of the charter school concept is autonomy in exchange for accountability. The following mechanisms are intended to ensure that community schools are accountable to their students, parents, staff, sponsor, and the public.

Annual reports. Community schools are required to produce annual reports to provide information on their educational activities, financial status, and progress in meeting the academic goals and performance standards agreed to in the school's contract. These reports must be submitted to their sponsor, the parents of all the students enrolled in the school, and the Legislative Office of Education Oversight. There is no legal deadline by which community schools must submit the annual reports; rather, the deadline is negotiated between the community school and its sponsor as part of their contract.

Annual report cards produced by the Ohio Department of Education (ODE). ODE is required by law to issue an annual report card for each community school that has operated for two full school years. The report card is to be based on the school's academic and financial performance.

This report card will be similar to those issued for public school districts, (e.g., passage rates on proficiency tests, attendance rates, etc.); however, ODE must develop "models" of report cards appropriate for the various types of community schools operating in the state.

ODE is required to distribute these report cards to the parents of the community school's students, to the board of education of the school district in which the school is located, and to any person who requests a copy.

Financial audits conducted by Ohio's Auditor of State. Community schools are required by law to maintain financial records in the same manner as school districts (that is, Uniform School Accounting System and the Education Management Information System). Similar to other public school districts, community schools must file an annual financial report with the Auditor of State within 150 days of the end of the fiscal year. Community schools are audited annually for their first two years of operation and then biennially, unless the community school receives $300,000 or more in federal revenues. In this case, an annual audit is required.

Contract renewal and termination. By law, if the sponsor of a community school is dissatisfied with the student performance or fiscal management of the community school, or feels the community school has violated a provision of its contract, the sponsor may terminate or fail to renew the contract at the end of the school year.

Parental choice. Implicit in the community school concept is the notion that a community school will only remain open as long as parents continue to send their children to that school. If a community school fails to meet parents' expectations, the students eventually will move to other schools (taking their funding with them) and over time the sponsoring entity will be forced to close the school. This last accountability device is not stated in law, rather it is the mechanism of a market-driven model of education – the essence of school choice.

General education laws pertaining to community schools

One of the most purported advantages of community schools is their exemption from numerous state laws and mandates. Exhibit 3 highlights the laws from which community schools are exempt. These exemptions are designed to enhance flexibility in terms of educational programming and administration.

Even though community schools are free from many of the rules and regulations that other public schools must meet – there are still a number of state laws with which community schools must comply. Exhibit 4 outlines laws from which community schools are *not* exempt.

Exhibit 3
Examples of General Education Laws from which Community Schools Are Exempt

Curriculum. Community schools are not required to develop competency-based programs in composition, mathematics, science, citizenship and reading.

Grade Levels. Community schools are not required to maintain all grade levels between kindergarten and twelfth. Community schools may serve fewer grade levels, such as kindergarten through sixth grade.

Length of School Year. Community schools are not required to operate for a minimum number of days or follow the requirements related to alternative school calendars. *However*, community schools are required to provide a minimum of 920 hours of education to their students. Several community schools operate "year round."

Fiscal Administration. Community schools are not required to have a "treasurer," or follow the training requirements for school treasurers and business managers. *However*, community schools must designate a fiscal officer. Community schools are not required to receive technical assistance in school budgeting and finances from the State Board of Education. Community schools are not required to follow competitive bidding laws.

Food Service. Community schools are not required to follow the State Board of Education standards for operating school food programs; *except*, that health and safety standards related to school facilities must still be met by the community school.

Salaries. Community schools are not required to pay teachers or non-teaching employees according to the state minimum salary schedules.

Record Keeping. Community schools are not required to report school average daily membership, maintain certain school records, or annually report licensed employees to the State Board of Education. Community schools are not required to follow student record keeping laws. *However*, community schools are required to follow the laws related to EMIS reporting and report attendance figures for funding purposes.

Administrators. Community schools are exempt from the requirements related to employing school superintendents, assistant superintendents, principals, assistant principals, and other administrators.

Exhibit 4
Examples of General Education Laws from which Community Schools are *not* Exempt

Curriculum and Student Testing. Community schools must administer Ohio's Proficiency Tests in grades 4, 6, 9, and 12. Additionally, community schools may only award diplomas to students passing the Ninth-Grade Proficiency Tests and completing the high school curriculum as set by the school.

Student Expulsions. Community schools are required to follow the state's procedures for student suspension, expulsion, and permanent expulsion. Community school students must be afforded the same due process rights that are guaranteed in other public schools.

Student Records. Community schools are required to obtain records from a child's previous school and to maintain records on student hearing and vision testing, as well as student immunizations. Furthermore, community schools must ensure confidentiality of student information.

Student Screenings. Community schools are required to screen all new kindergartners and first-graders in hearing, vision, speech and communication, and health. Furthermore, if the community school opts to have any dental or medical screenings, it must include hearing and vision screenings. Community schools are also required to report any cases of suspected child abuse.

EMIS. Community schools must comply with all requirements of Ohio's Education Management Information System (EMIS).

Staffing. Community schools must participate in the State Teachers Retirement System (STRS) and the School Employees Retirement System (SERS). Furthermore, all job applicants to a community school must be checked for criminal activity (BCI check). School bus drivers must meet all state requirements, and all teachers must be appropriately certified.

Special Education. Community schools must follow *all* state and federal laws related to special education.

Auditing. The Auditor of State must fiscally audit community schools.

See Appendix C for a complete listing of the sections of the Ohio Revised Code from which community schools are and are not exempt.

Potential confusions

Community schools are very new to Ohio. So new, in fact, that a recent public poll conducted in Ohio found that two-thirds of adults have never heard of charter or community schools. Given that community schools have only been operating in Ohio for a year and a half, it is not surprising that LOEO found numerous misperceptions among policymakers, educators, and members of the general public about these schools.

Community schools are not the same as voucher schools. Even though community schools and vouchers are both "choice" programs, community schools are public, whereas vouchers can be spent in private schools. Community schools are *not* permitted to charge their students tuition; voucher schools are permitted to charge their students tuition (money or in-kind services), above and beyond the $2,500 voucher provided by the state.

The Pilot Project Scholarship Program in Cleveland is limited to students whose family income averages less than $7,000 a year. Community schools are open to all students – regardless of income levels. Furthermore, the teachers in voucher schools are not required to be licensed, whereas, the teachers in community schools must be licensed.

Private schools converting to community schools comply with the law. Some have questioned whether or not private schools may convert to community schools, given that the law states that "no nonpublic chartered or nonchartered school in existence on January 1, 1997, is eligible to become a community school under this chapter." (ORC §3314.01(A)(2))

Three of the 15 community schools that operated during the 1998-1999 school year were previously nonpublic chartered schools:

1. HOPE Academy University Campus (Akron) - previously Interfaith Elementary School;
2. HOPE Academy Cathedral Campus (Cleveland) - previously Mt. Pleasant Christian School; and
3. HOPE Academy Chapelside Campus (Cleveland) - previously Mt. Pleasant Catholic Elementary Education Center.

Technically, these three schools comply with the community schools law because they ceased their existence as nonpublic chartered schools before becoming a community school. Each closed its previous school, returned its charter to the State Board of Education, formed a new governing board, and agreed to admit students on a lottery basis.

Ohio's Attorney General ruled that a chartered nonpublic school that meets the above criteria is *legally* eligible to convert to a community school. The Attorney General also stated in her opinion, "though this situation may technically comply with the law, it arguably may not comply with the spirit of the legislature's intent." (Ohio Attorney General's Opinion, June 8, 1998)

Chapter III
Characteristics of Ohio's First 15 Community Schools

This chapter examines the key characteristics of Ohio's first 15 community schools in terms of their sponsorship, reasons for opening, educational goals and approaches, enrollment, grade levels, student and teacher characteristics, and governance.

The general characteristics of all 15 community schools are described below. Appendix D provides a detailed profile of each school, including key facts about its students, staffing, rationale for opening, educational approach, distinctive characteristics, future challenges, and a summary of the school's annual report.

* * * * * * * * *

First Year Initiative

Sponsors

Of the 15 community schools that opened during the 1998-1999 school year, ten were sponsored by the State Board of Education and five were sponsored by the Lucas County Educational Service Center (LCESC). Exhibit 5 lists the schools' names, sponsors, location, and enrollment. None of the original 15 community schools were sponsored by the University of Toledo or by a local board of education. Also, no conversion community schools were established during the 1998-1999 school year.

Exhibit 5
1998-1999 Community Schools

Sponsor	School	Location	Number of Students*
State Board of Education	1. HOPE Academy Brown Street Campus	Akron	248
	2. HOPE Academy University Campus	Akron	137
	3. Harmony Community School	Cincinnati	201
	4. Oak Tree Montessori	Cincinnati	64
	5. HOPE Academy Cathedral Campus	Cleveland	319
	6. HOPE Academy Chapelside Campus	Cleveland	296
	7. Old Brooklyn Montessori School	Cleveland	25
	8. City Day Community School	Dayton	56
	9. Eagle Heights Academy	Youngstown	623
	10. Youngstown Community School	Youngstown	36
Lucas County Educational Service Center	11. Aurora Academy	Toledo	85
	12. JADES Academy	Toledo	39
	13. M.O.D.E.L. Community School	Toledo Area	26
	14. Toledo Village Shule	Toledo	148
	15. Vail Meadows CHOICE	Toledo Area	29
		TOTAL	2,332

*As of October, 1998.

During the 1999-2000 school year, the 15 original community schools have been joined by 33 new schools, for a total of 48 community schools. Of the new schools, one is sponsored by the University of Toledo, five by LCESC, and 25 by the State Board of Education. In addition, two schools are sponsored by local boards of education in Dayton and Toledo.

Although this report focuses on the 15 original community schools, Appendix E lists the 33 community schools that opened during the 1999-2000 school year, their locations, sponsors, grade spans, and enrollments as of October, 1999.

Reasons for opening

Most community school founders say they started their school in response to what they saw as deficiencies in the ability of the public school system to meet student needs. Some of the characteristics that community school founders hope to remedy include:

- A lack of individual attention to students as a result of large class sizes and high student-to-teacher ratios;
- Bureaucratic structures and red tape that inhibit innovation, change, and spontaneity;
- Unchallenging learning experiences;
- The habitual promotion of students to higher grade levels regardless of competency;
- Declining student proficiency test scores;
- Lack of classroom discipline;
- A "one-size-fits all" approach to learning and teaching; and
- A lack of consideration of the needs of the "whole child."

Three community schools were planned specifically to provide a supportive learning environment for children with special needs. The Multiple-Options for Developmental and Education Learning community school (M.O.D.E.L.) was created to provide an early, intensive, and highly structured educational program for children with autism. Vail Meadows CHOICE was formed to provide a specialized therapeutic environment for children with behavioral and learning disabilities. JADES Academy was created to offer an academic program to adjudicated children in a residential treatment facility. In all three cases, the lack of comparable programs within the public school system was cited as the primary reason for opening.

While most community schools cited parental involvement as a factor in their creation, four community schools had parents as the primary driving force behind their development. The parents of M.O.D.E.L., for instance, wanted to form a school that would better address the treatment needs of their autistic children. In the case of Oak Tree Montessori and Old Brooklyn Montessori community schools, parents wanted to create a school using this specialized approach to education and learning in their community. Parents of disadvantaged children enrolled in a day care center wanted to see a kindergarten program established at the same location. They helped form the Youngstown Community School.

The reasons for starting community schools in Ohio are similar to those of other states. Two reports sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education found that nearly seven of ten newly created charter schools seek an alternative vision of schooling than that offered by the public school system. An additional two out of ten were founded to serve a specific target population of students.

Educational goals and approaches

The purposes and goals that founders have established for their schools vary widely. Several schools mentioned in their contracts or annual reports such broad educational goals as:

- Helping students identify and develop their unique talents;
- Preparing students to take an active role in citizenship;
- Fostering in students a life-long interest in learning;
- Developing in students an appreciation for the arts;
- Helping students develop specific skills (e.g., reading, thinking, problem solving, social, and cognitive); and
- Developing proper character.

The schools that were more specific about their purposes and goals were those designed for students with special needs (e.g., autism, severe behavior disorders, mental and physical disabilities, etc.).

In terms of educational differences, some community school directors referenced an overarching educational philosophy or theory that guided their practice. Examples include Howard Gardner's multiple intelligences theory and the Montessori approach to learning. Several directors referred to their school's educational approach in terms of a general curriculum focus, such as "back to basics," technology-focused, college preparatory, adult daily living skills, and life skills development. Others referenced Ohio's Competency Based Education Model, noting most frequently the content areas of science, mathematics, and language arts.

Most community schools cited the use of small group instruction as a central component of their educational approaches. Other instructional strategies included the use of self-paced computerized instruction, individualized instruction, field trips, independent study, cooperative learning, guest speakers/instructors, mini-lessons, video presentations and team teaching.

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School, Student, and Teacher Characteristics

Throughout this section, LOEO compares community schools' demographics to the six corresponding city school districts in which they are located or from which they draw the majority of their students (Akron, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Dayton, Toledo, and Youngstown). Most of the data are drawn from Ohio's Education Management Information System (EMIS), as reported by community schools and school districts. For a profile of the key features of *each* community school, see Appendix D.

School characteristics

Enrollment. In general, community schools are smaller in size than their traditional public school counterparts. One third of community schools began the 1998-1999 school year with fewer than 50 students, while one half enrolled less than

100 students. Only two community schools reported enrollments of more than 300 students; the highest enrollment – 623 students – was reported by Eagle Heights Academy of Youngstown.

In terms of their small size, community schools in Ohio resemble charter schools nationally. Approximately 65% of charter schools nationally enrolled fewer than 200 students during the 1997-1998 school year. Thirty-six percent enrolled fewer than 100 students.

In the aggregate, Ohio's 15 community schools enrolled 2,332 students as of October, 1998. These students made up less than 1.2% of the public school enrollment in the corresponding city school districts. The exception is in Youngstown where community school students comprised 5.7% of Youngstown City School's total student population during the 1998-1999 school year.

Across the 15 community schools, students transferred from several hundred "sending schools." Most of these schools contributed fewer than three students to the community schools in their area. Approximately 10% of community school students came from non-public schools or a home-school environment.

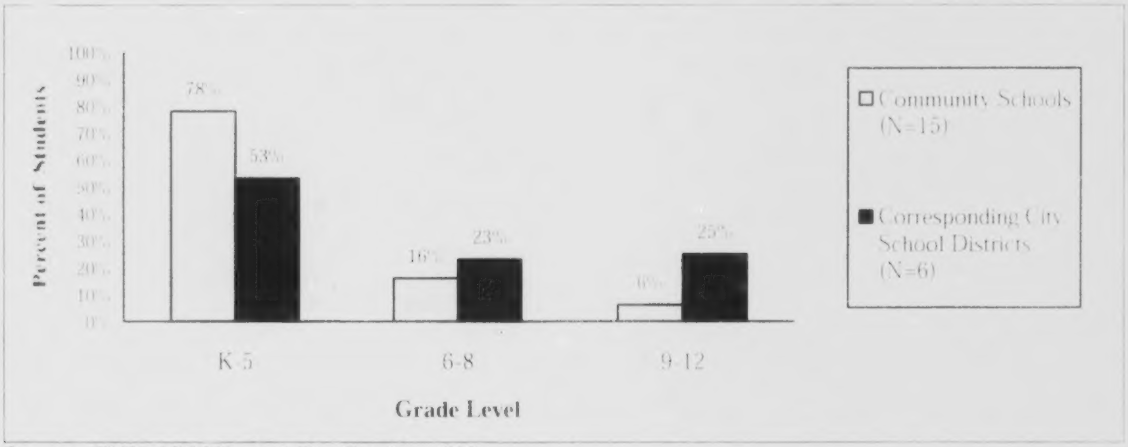
Parents continue to choose community schools, as all of these schools experienced enrollment gains in their second year of operation. The 15 original community schools increased their enrollment 38%, from 2,332 students in October, 1998 to 3,220 students in October, 1999.

With the addition of 33 new schools opening during the 1999-2000 school year, there were approximately 8,700 community schools students as of October, 1999, a 271% increase over the first year. However, five community schools had not submitted their October enrollment figures at the time of this analysis, so this number is an underestimate. (See Appendix E for a school-by-school breakdown of October, 1999 enrollments.)

Grade levels. Ohio's community schools serve a higher proportion of elementary school students and a lower proportion of middle and high school students than their corresponding city school districts. Exhibit 6 compares the percent of students in elementary, middle, and high school served by community schools and their city district counterparts.

Seventy-eight percent of community school students were enrolled in elementary grades during the 1998-1999 school year, compared to 53% of students in corresponding city school districts. Only 6% of community school students were high schoolers compared to 25% of city school district students.

Exhibit 6
Percent of Students by Grade Level
Community Schools and Corresponding City School Districts
1998-1999 School Year



Source: EMIS ADM Control File, October, 1998

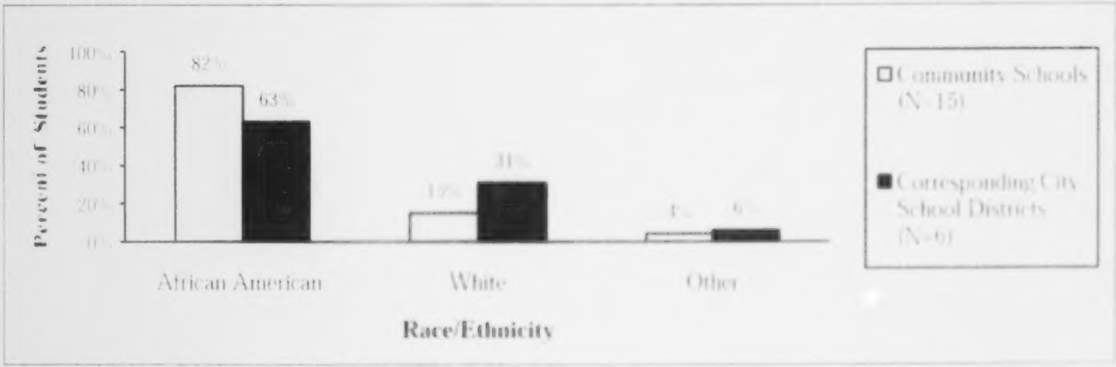
No community school expressed exactly why they selected one grade span over another. However, one reason could be the lower operating costs of elementary programs compared to high school programs. Also, the elementary years are viewed by some as critical in a child's development of good academic skills.

Student characteristics

Race and ethnicity. Overall, the 15 community schools enrolled a higher proportion of African American students than their city district counterparts. For the 1998-1999 school year, 82% of community school students were African American, compared to 63% in corresponding city districts.

Exhibit 7 illustrates the percentage of community school and corresponding city school district students according to race and ethnicity. The "Other" category refers to students who are classified as Hispanic, Asian or Pacific Islander, American Indian or Alaskan Native, or multicultural.

Exhibit 7
Race and Ethnicity of Students in Community Schools and Corresponding City School Districts
1998-1999 School Year



Source: EMIS ADM Control File, October, 1998

Of the 15 community schools, ten enrolled more minority students than their district counterparts and five enrolled fewer. Of the five with fewer minority students, three are the special needs schools and one is within three percentage points of its district counterpart.

The exception is the Old Brooklyn Montessori Community School. It least resembles its host district with only 20% of its student population consisting of racial and ethnic minorities, compared to 71% in the Cleveland Municipal Schools. Appendix F compares the racial and ethnic makeup of each community school with that of its corresponding city school district.

The racial and ethnic composition of Ohio's community schools are similar to charter schools nationally. The U.S. Department of Education's 1999 report found that charter schools in 14 of the 24 states with these schools enrolled a considerably higher percentage of non-white students than did other public schools in these states.

Socio-economic levels. According to calculations used by the Ohio Department of Education to disperse anti-poverty funds, most community schools enroll a greater proportion of students in poverty than their corresponding city school district. Appendix F compares the difference in the proportion of students in poverty for each community school and its corresponding city school district.

There appears to be no evidence that community schools in Ohio are "skimming" wealthier students away from public schools. Nationally, statistics show almost identical portions of charter and other public school students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch.

Special needs students. Community schools educate a smaller percentage of special needs students than their counterpart city school districts. Using October, 1998 enrollment data, only 6% of community school students were reported in EMIS as having a disability requiring an Individualized Education Program (IEP), compared to 13% of all corresponding city school district students. Three community schools are designed specifically for students with special needs (JADES Academy, M.O.D.E.L., and Vail Meadows CHOICE). When factoring out students from these schools, only 3% of community school students have IEPs.

Many community school founders explained to LOEO that they had difficulty obtaining student IEPs from the resident district in a timely fashion and, in many cases, had to re-test students suspected of having disabilities. As such, the number of students with disabilities reported in October of 1998 was lower than the final count at the end of the year.

An analysis of year-end student counts shows an increase in the percentage of students with disabilities attending community schools from 6% to 8%. For those schools not exclusively devoted to special needs students, the percentage of students with disabilities rose from 3% to 4% over the course of the 1998-1999 school year. Despite these increases, the proportion of students with disabilities served by community schools was still much lower than that of the six corresponding city school districts.

Nationally, 8% of charter school students have disabilities. For a list of each community school's percentage of students with disabilities, see Appendix F.

Attendance. Based on EMIS data, the average attendance rate for all community school students during the 1998-1999 school year was 94%. The lowest rate (90%) was reported by Old Brooklyn Montessori and the highest (95%) by HOPE Academy University Campus. The attendance rate of community schools compares favorably to their city school counterparts where, during the same school year, attendance ranged from a low of 86% (Dayton) to a high of 91% (Toledo).

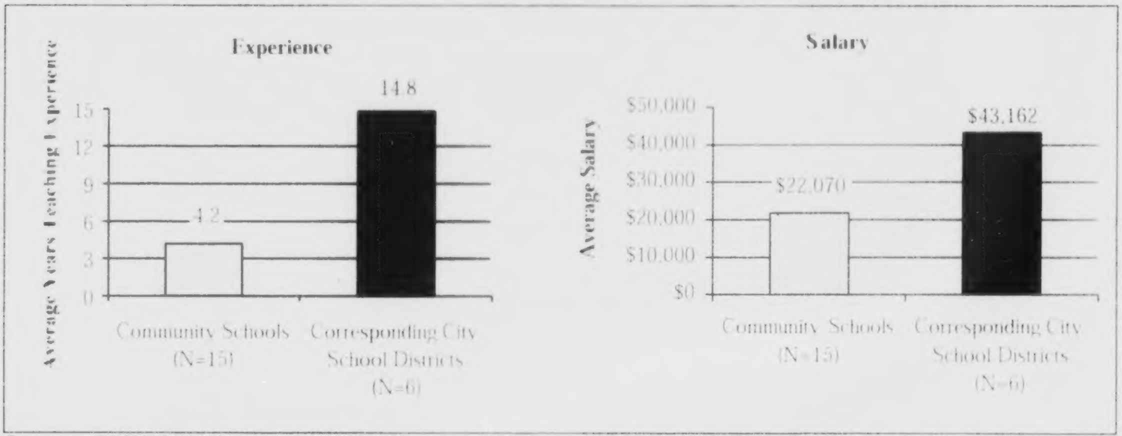
Student retention. As reported in EMIS, 223 total students left their respective community schools during the year to attend another school. LOEO also asked the director of each community school to estimate the number of students that were enrolled during the 1998-1999 school year who did not return for the 1999-2000 school year and to indicate the reasons for not returning. On average, community schools reported that 13% of their students did not return for the second school year. Directors listed several reasons for the loss, including mobility of parents, lack of adequate and reliable transportation, and preference for traditional public schools.

Teacher characteristics

Salary and experience. Both the years of teaching experience and salaries of community school teachers were considerably lower than those of their city district colleagues, according to EMIS records. On average, community school teachers had 4.2 years of teaching experience compared to 14.8 years for teachers in the six corresponding city school districts. The annual salary of community school teachers paralleled their relative inexperience.

A teacher in a community school earned, on average, $22,070 during the 1998-1999 school year. In contrast, an average teacher in the corresponding city school districts earned $43,162 during the same time period. Exhibit 8 illustrates the salary and experience disparities between community and corresponding city school district teachers.

Exhibit 8
Average Years of Teaching Experience and Average Annual Salary Community Schools and Corresponding City School Districts 1998-1999 School Year



Source: EMIS Staff Employment File, October, 1998

Twenty-nine percent of all community school teachers were first year teachers and earned, on average, $19,292 a year. By contrast, new teachers in corresponding school districts earned an average annual salary of $28,339.

Among the 15 community schools, the only school to pay higher than its corresponding school district was City Day Community School in Dayton. It paid its four teachers an average annual salary of $45,250. City Day's teachers were also the most experienced, with an average of 27 years in the field. At the low end of the teacher pay scale were the four HOPE Academies and Youngstown Community School, each with annual salaries at or below $19,000.

The schools with the least experienced teachers were HOPE Academy Brown Street and HOPE Academy University with all teachers reported as new. For a list of each community school's average teacher salary and years teaching experience, see Appendix F.

Students per teacher. According to EMIS data, community schools had an average of 18.0 students per teacher. The school with the lowest number of students per teacher was M.O.D.E.L. with 5.2 students per teacher. The highest was HOPE Academy Brown Street with 27.6 students per teacher. LOEO tried to calculate a comparable student per teacher ratio for the corresponding city school districts, but was unable to do so for this report.

All but four community schools employ teacher aides to assist classroom teachers. On average, community schools employed one aide for every 1.4 teachers. Factoring in teacher aides, the average number of students per teacher and aide combined for all community schools was 10.4 students. See Appendix D for ratios of students to teacher and aides for each community school.

It should be noted that the statistics reported above represent the total number of students in a given school or district divided by the total number of teachers. They do not represent the number of students in a given classroom.

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Community School Governance

Ohio law mandates that community schools have a governing board that acts as the school's legal authority. Similar to other states with charter schools, beyond mandating that a community school have such a board, Ohio law says little about its composition, structure, or function.

Member selection and background

Unlike members of school boards, governing board members of community schools are not elected to their position. Instead, they are selected according to the policies and procedures set forth in the school's contract.

Almost all community schools have set up their governing authorities in order to draw upon the various skills and experiences of their members. Community school board members represent a variety of backgrounds and professions including : primary, secondary and higher education; architecture; law; social services; marketing; financial services; and the ministry. One third of community school governing boards include parents or community members.

Ohio law specifically allows community school governing board members to also be employed by the board as school employees. Eight of the 15 community schools have or have had their director sit as a member of the governing board. One school removed its director from the board after experiencing significant conflicts.

Number of members and their terms

Ohio law does not specify the number of members on a community school's governing board. Furthermore, there is no legislatively determined limit regarding how long a governing board member can serve. Of the 15 community schools operating during the 1998-1999 school year, original governing board membership ranged from three to 13 members, with an average of six members. Since opening, nine community schools have either reduced or enlarged their boards, with the majority opting to expand membership.

Nine of the 15 community schools experienced turnover in their governing board membership during their first year and a half of operation. The degree of turnover for these boards varied between two and six members. Community schools appear to find replacements for members that leave, with only one governing board still having vacancies.

Board meetings and policies

Most community school governing boards meet an average of once per month, with the exception of governing boards from four of the community schools, which meet quarterly. Community school governing boards are required to follow all public meeting and open record laws.

Ohio law does not require the governing authorities of community schools to perform specific tasks or roles. Rather, it is up to each board to determine the extent of its involvement in policy making and management. LOEO found that the role of governing authorities varies greatly by community school.

The governing boards of eight community schools were involved in writing the articles of incorporation for their schools, approving budgets and contracts, hiring teachers, and reviewing other policies. Some governing authorities monitor their school's activities and ensure that academic goals set by the board are being met.

According to three of the community school directors, the governing authorities maintain control of the educational programming and the school's curriculum. In one case, the school's director explained that the governing board of its community school has made no policy decisions — rather, the founders set policy and made decisions. Instead, the primary purpose of this school's governing authority is to help resolve disagreements and impasses between the founder and teachers in the school.

Shared boards

There are two instances in which community schools share the same governing boards. The two HOPE schools in Akron have the same governing board. The same is true for the two HOPE schools in Cleveland.

Management companies

Each community school must be established as a nonprofit corporation and the role of its governing authority clearly stated in its contract. However, the law does not preclude a for-profit company from managing the school.

Six of the 15 governing boards hired management companies to operate their community schools. The four HOPE schools hired the same management company, White Hat Management, Inc. to handle their day-to-day operation. Eagle Heights Academy hired White Hat Management as well, though only to assist with its curricular development and special education programming. A sixth school, JADES Academy, is managed by Boysville, Inc.

In the case of the four HOPE schools and JADES Academy, the management company was also the school's developer. In fact, the governing board members for these schools were selected by the management company itself.

Charter school governance boards nationally

The nature and structure of Ohio's governing boards is similar to that of other states with charter schools. Comparable to Ohio, 50% of states with legislation allowing charter schools require that the governance structure of the school be specified in the contract with the sponsor. An additional 25% of these states do not specify anything else about charter school governing boards in their law.

Chapter IV
LOEO Findings

This chapter describes the challenges and successes that community schools experienced during their first year of operation.

LOEO found that despite many obstacles, Ohio's first 15 community schools were successful at opening their doors to students, completing a full school year, and continuing to operate during a second year. These schools struggled with untimely funding, delays in finding facilities, transportation difficulties, and mixed levels of technical assistance. LOEO also found that community schools had problems with their first year annual reports, which are used for accountability purposes.

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Funding

Even though all 15 community schools managed to financially open and operate for an entire school year, one of their major implementation obstacles was funding. Over half the founders of community schools felt that the amount of planning and start-up funding was inadequate. Many also encountered problems receiving state and federal funding.

Planning and start-up grants

The General Assembly provided planning and start-up grants to the community schools in the Lucas County Pilot Project. Similar to entitlements, each of the five Lucas County schools that opened during the 1998-1999 school year received $150,000. The five schools that opened in Lucas County for the 1999-2000 school year have also received $150,000 each. The General Assembly has since eliminated this fund and instead has appropriated planning and start-up grants to be used by community schools statewide.

In addition to the state, the federal government has established a grant program to aid charter (community) schools in designing and implementing their schools. These federal funds (Title X) are dispersed on a competitive basis. Each community school awarded these funds receives $50,000 a year for three fiscal years ($150,000 total).

Eight of the 15 Ohio community schools operating during the 1998-1999 school year received these federal dollars. Three of these eight schools were in Lucas County; therefore, these three community schools received both the $150,000 in state and the $50,000 in federal funding during the 1998-1999 school year. The most recent budget bill (Am. Sub. H.B. 282) prohibits community schools from receiving both state and federal start-up funds.

Problems with start-up funds. In order for planning and start-up dollars to be most useful to a community school's development, the funds need to be available several months prior to the school's opening. However, federal start-up grants were not dispersed until March and June of 1999, many months after the schools' opening. Even then, only eight of the 15 community schools received these grants. Similarly, four of the five schools in Lucas County did not receive the state start-up grants until as late as three months after their final contracts were signed.

A few directors of schools indicated that only after final contracts were signed did "funding start to flow." As a result, one school director resorted to charging school purchases on a personal credit card, while another used personal money "to get the school off the ground." One director of a community school said that the lack of funds made the planning and start-up process an "arduous venture."

Regular state and federal funds

In general, community schools were eligible to receive the *same type* of state and federal funds that traditional school districts received during the 1998-1999 school year. State funds included:

- Base cost funding;
- Special education; and
- Disadvantaged Pupil Impact Aid (DPIA).

Federal funds included:

- Title I (compensatory education);
- Title II (professional development);
- Title IV (safe and drug-free schools);
- Title VI (innovative education strategies);
- Title VI B (handicapped); and
- School lunch and breakfast programs.

The legislation that created community schools was enacted less than a year before Ohio's major attempt at school finance reform. As the General Assembly, the Ohio Department of Education (ODE), and public schools struggled with establishing a more reliable and equitable means of funding public schools, the concept of community schools in Ohio was just beginning to take form. ODE found itself "redefining" school finance for traditional public school districts at the same time it was "defining" school finance for community schools. Because of this, ODE had difficulties in dispersing funds to community schools.

Problems with state funds. Ten of the 15 community schools that educated special needs students during the 1998-1999 school year were affected by delays in special education funding. There were three major reasons for these delays. First, the special education funding formula for community schools differed from that of traditional public schools. Second, because the formula relied upon inconsistent spending data from all the school districts in the various counties, ODE had difficulties calculating the funding. And third, community schools overestimated the amount of funds they would receive from the state for educating special needs students, which resulted in a request to the Ohio General Assembly for additional special education funds.

In addition to the regular state special education funds, the General Assembly earmarked $2.2 million dollars in FY 1999 (Am. Sub. H.B. 850 - Capital Bill) to provide grants to community schools for the special education costs exceeding the special education funding amounts originally specified in the law.

As a result of these problems, it was not until March of 1999 (seven months into the school year) that special education funds were dispersed to five of the ten community schools educating special needs students.

Community schools did not receive funds for two components of Disadvantaged Pupil Impact Aid (DPIA) – class size reduction and safety, security and remediation – until April of 1999. Two main factors contributed to late DPIA payments. First, ODE had difficulty calculating the formula (it lacked the previous year's enrollment data), and second, community schools did not submit the necessary data until March of 1999.

Problems with federal funds. ODE's Division of Federal Assistance did not determine the federal allocations for community schools until February of 1999, mid-way into the school year. As a result, community schools did not receive federal funds (Title I, II, IV, and VI) until September, 1999 – well after the 1998-1999 school year.

Founders of community schools experienced numerous difficulties with the federal application process and reported they lacked experience applying for federal funds (e.g., completing the electronic application). Some felt "overwhelmed" by the paperwork and either wanted ODE to complete the applications for them or simply to have ODE provide them with the funding without completing an application.

The reliability of future funding

Many of the funding problems that existed during the first school year have been resolved through changes in legislation (Am. Sub. H.B. 282) and improved practices. Special education funds are now determined through a weighted formula similar to that used for traditional public school districts. For new community schools, ODE now uses an estimated number to calculate and start the flow of DPIA funds until actual counts can be gathered later in the school year. Also, ODE has provided community schools with several workshops and on-site assistance with the application process for federal funds.

Helpful factors

Access to resources. Although most founders of the schools cited inadequate funds as the greatest barrier to opening, others described how other sources of funding (e.g., money to purchase a bus), donations (e.g., big-screen television, microwave, VCR, "consumables"), and in-kind services (e.g., printings and mailings at no cost, pro bono legal, contracting, and accounting services) greatly facilitated the planning and opening of their schools. In general, schools with access to such resources appeared to face fewer barriers and challenges to opening.

Community resources. Beneficial to many community schools were connections to community resources. For example, staff at the University of Toledo helped directors of two community schools. These community school directors also benefited from the university library resources for planning and developing a "research-based" curriculum and educational practices for their schools.

Some school founders were also helped by the personal and professional experience of their governing board members, including those with knowledge of school administration, law, architecture, building construction, and accounting. One school director said that a former school administrator helped with problem solving and "learning the ropes of public schooling." Another described how a director of a national school reform organization was instrumental in helping acquire essential instructional materials.

Some community schools benefited from other local resources, such as positive support from the local press, a state legislator, and volunteers during the planning process. Schools also benefited from using community resources for instruction and learning opportunities, including the local YMCA for swimming instruction and the public library for class research projects or for story hours. Other school directors described visiting the local symphony and ballet as a way of integrating the arts into their curriculum.

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Facilities

Nationally, finding adequate facilities is one of the biggest obstacles to opening a charter school on time. Thirty-six percent of charter schools around the nation found inadequate facilities to be a barrier to implementation.

In Ohio, although five of the 15 community schools that opened during the 1998-1999 school year experienced difficulties in finding a facility, all 15 schools managed to open their doors in time for the 1998-1999 school year. However, at least ten other new community schools postponed opening for the 1999-2000 school year due to facility problems.

Hindering factors

One-third of the original 15 community schools had difficulty securing a facility. For those community schools that were either managed by a company or affiliated with a well-established service provider located in the community (e.g., a pre-school), acquiring a facility was not a significant problem. In these cases, facilities were either already owned or secured by the management company or service provider. For community schools not affiliated with such groups, however, acquiring a facility was one, if not the greatest, challenge they faced in opening their schools.

First, there is an inadequate supply of suitable school facilities available to newly created community schools. Schools require large spaces, configured for student learning; such places rarely exist. One director explained that acquiring a facility "required lots of hours on the phone and lots of driving around various neighborhoods." Two community schools described their local public school districts as having a "monopoly" on school facilities. At first, both community schools approached the districts directly about purchasing or leasing unused school buildings and were refused. Both community schools ended up leasing or purchasing the school buildings through a third party.

Second, some of the community school directors believed the difficulties in securing facilities were due, in part, to not receiving start-up funding until after contracts were signed with their sponsors. Community schools do not receive revenue sources specifically for facilities; instead, they must spend a portion of their operating budget on lease or loan payments. Building owners were reluctant to lease space to a community school that did not have a signed contract (with a sponsor) that would guarantee future payments. Yet in some cases, the community school's sponsor would not sign a contract (with the school) until the school had a signed lease agreement. This "Catch-22" situation caused a great deal of stress for several community school directors.

Adding to these difficulties are building owners or lenders who are reluctant to sign lease agreements or loans with businesses that lack a track record. The difficulties that Ohio community schools had in securing a facility mirror those in other states.

Possible remedies for financing facilities

The following strategies have been suggested in a 1999 report, *Paying for the Charter Schoolhouse: A Policy Agenda for Charter School Facilities Financing*. These strategies are being used in other states and may be helpful in overcoming the facility barriers in Ohio.

- Four states and the District of Columbia have begun to provide **capital funding** to charter schools, typically on a per-pupil basis — Arizona, Florida, Massachusetts, and Minnesota.

- Charter schools are beginning to have access to **tax-exempt financing**. Two states, Colorado and North Carolina, have passed laws that allow existing public bodies to issue bonds on behalf of charter schools. These laws acknowledge charter schools as public entities; therefore, banks that lend money to these schools are not required to pay federal income tax on the interest they earn from such a loan.

- Some charter schools are provided access to **low-interest loan pools**. The Chicago Public School system established a two million dollar pool of funds upon which charter schools may borrow facility money at a 5% interest rate. Examples of privately funded loan pools that assist charter schools in obtaining lower interest loans also exist.

- Some policymakers are creating incentives for school districts, government agencies, and other organizations to provide charter schools with **unused facility space at lower costs**.

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Transportation

Under Ohio's community schools law, school districts are legally responsible for transporting community school students. Almost half of the 15 community schools identified problems with having their students transported to and from school by their local districts. LOEO describes the perspectives of both the community schools and school districts in the transportation problems of the 1998-1999 school year.

Transportation requirements

According to Ohio law, each school board must transport students who reside in its district to community schools located in its district or in another district. Districts must transport community school students on the same basis that they provide transportation to their students who attend regular public schools (at the same grade level and living the same distance from school).

A district is not required to transport non-handicapped students to and from a community school located in another district, if the transportation would require more than 30 minutes of travel time. Transportation services are not required if the district determines that such transportation is "unnecessary or unreasonable."

Where it is impractical to transport a pupil to and from a community school, a district may, in lieu of providing the transportation, pay a parent, guardian, or other person in charge of the child for transporting that child. A school district may not make a "blanket" determination that all community school student transportation is "unnecessary or unreasonable." School districts must make such a determination on a child-by-child basis.

Furthermore, a decision not to transport community school students must be confirmed by the State Board of Education. According to an informal opinion by Ohio's Attorney General, a school district must provide and continue to provide transportation to community school students *until* the State Board of Education confirms the school board's decision.

Community school perspective

All 15 community schools began the 1998-1999 school year believing that transportation would be provided by the resident school district in the same manner that the district transports students in traditional public schools. However, for the majority of community schools, transportation was a major issue that affected their day-to-day operation. Specific problems cited by community school administrators during their first year of operation included:

- Delays in the routing and transportation of students;
- Absence of yellow bus transportation (public transit bus passes instead);
- Changes in the school day to accommodate bus service;
- Overcrowding of buses; and
- Paying for transportation services without state reimbursement.

According to the directors of six community schools, students withdrew from their schools because of non-existent or inadequate transportation.

Of the nine community schools that received yellow bus service during the 1998-1999 school year, one in three reported having to alter the start and end times of their school day to accommodate bus schedules. One of these community schools had to start 45 minutes later and end the school day 15 minutes earlier than originally planned.

Even though the law provides community schools with flexibility in setting their school calendars and daily schedules, community schools are unable to fully use this freedom when negotiating transportation schedules with school districts.

In the case of two community schools in Lucas County, the Toledo City School District refused altogether to transport their students. The district pointed to a provision in the original community school law stating that a district is not responsible for transporting students to community schools located outside the district. Other school districts in the county followed by citing the same lack of legal responsibility.

These two community schools had to frantically arrange for transportation of their students just days before they were set to open. For one community school, opening was delayed for two weeks while the school's director searched for an alternative means of transportation. The other community school had to rely on its teachers to drive vans for the first month of operation until drivers could be hired. These transportation barriers cost one community school $131,234 (20% of its 1998-1999 expenditures).

Four of the five community schools in Lucas County arranged for and paid for transportation, either because the district refused or because the community school was dissatisfied with the service provided by the school district. However, these community schools did not receive any state reimbursement for their transportation, since they are not required by law to transport their students.

School district perspective

One of the biggest concerns school districts have with transporting community school students is the cost. School districts receive partial state reimbursement for the operational costs of transporting community school students — not for the purchase of additional school buses. Because community schools start and end the day at the same time as their public school counterparts, school districts must either procure more vehicles and drivers, or negotiate different start and end times with the community schools.

Additional transportation routes are often needed for community schools because their students are dispersed across numerous neighborhoods within a district. LOEO asked community schools to identify the number of students who came from various public and private school buildings within a district. Across all of the 15 community schools, each received students from an average of 32 different school buildings. Most school buildings contributed fewer than three students to a community school.

LOEO found a lack of state-level data on community school transportation, both in terms of numbers of students transported and the costs associated with transportation. Currently, community school students, their cost to transport, and the miles required to transport them are aggregated with traditional public school students, making a financial analysis of the impact difficult. Therefore, LOEO contacted the transportation coordinators of five of the corresponding school districts in which community schools operated during the 1998-1999 school year.

According to these school districts, two spent more per pupil to transport community school students in comparison to their own students, two spent less, and one spent the same. However, even these transportation data are inconsistent, because districts did not use the same criteria in determining their cost to transport community school students.

Beyond cost, the short time frame many community schools give the school districts to arrange for transportation is a source of frustration. LOEO found that most school districts establish their transportation routes by late June or early July. Community schools are still recruiting students in June and July and do not send their roster of students to the school district until August. In many cases, the community school's roster continues to be amended as the school year approaches and commences.

A further complication is the change in location of the school itself as community schools struggle to find facilities. For example, during the 1998-1999 school year, one community school reported five address changes to a school district before opening a month into the district's school year.

Finally, some school districts are upset that they are providing transportation to community school students but not their own. For example, one school district has a policy of not transporting students who participate in the district's intra-district open enrollment program. However, this same district is required to transport community school students district wide.

Vagueness of law

The original community schools law (Am. Sub. H.B. 215) specified that the school district must provide transportation to its resident students attending a community school *within* its district. However, the Lucas County Pilot was a countywide initiative — some students attended a community school located *outside* of their resident district. The law was later amended to require school districts to transport resident students to community schools located both inside and outside their own boundaries.

Current law stipulates that school districts are not responsible for providing transportation to non-handicapped students attending a community school outside the district, if the transportation requires more than 30 minutes of direct travel. How does this apply to handicapped students? The law is unclear about a district's responsibilities to transport students with disabilities to community schools.

Two of the three community schools serving predominately special needs students viewed the Individualized Education Programs (IEP) these districts had originally written for these students as still in effect, despite the fact that the students were no longer enrolled in the district. Therefore, these community schools believed the school districts were responsible for transporting handicapped students since the IEPs of these students required transportation as a related service.

In contrast, the districts believed the community schools were responsible for transporting special needs students because, for the purpose of special education, the law defined community schools as independent local education agencies (LEAs). Traditionally, LEAs bear the responsibility for assessing students, writing and carrying out their students' IEPs, and providing related services, such as transportation.

Lingering issues

No one is happy with the transportation of community school students. School districts are angry at the additional cost of the transportation, and community schools are angry at the poor transportation services they are receiving from the school districts. Furthermore, the law is still vague. Is it reasonable to expect community schools, given their current funding, to carry out all of the functions of an LEA, including transportation? Some school districts and community school parents are currently challenging certain provisions of the transportation law before the State Board of Education.

If the issues surrounding transportation are not resolved, there will likely be two outcomes. Community schools will risk losing current and future students due to a lack of adequate transportation; and the relationship between community schools and traditional public schools will continue to deteriorate.

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Technical Assistance

Although most community schools came into existence arguing that they could do a better job than traditional public schools in serving students, almost all community schools have come to realize that they need a significant amount of assistance in learning to open and operate a public school. Much of their technical assistance comes from their sponsor and the Ohio Department of Education.

Both the Ohio Department of Education and the Lucas County Educational Service Center offered technical assistance during the first year of operation. At times, this technical assistance facilitated community schools operation. In other instances, inadequate assistance appeared to be a barrier for community school development.

Lucas County Educational Service Center

In general, the community schools in Lucas County rated the technical assistance of the Lucas County Educational Service Center (LCESC) favorably. During the 1998-1999 biennium, the General Assembly appropriated $300,000 to the LCESC to provide services to community schools in the Lucas County Pilot Project. These services included sponsoring community schools, dispersing state planning and start up funds to community schools, providing technical assistance to sponsoring boards of education and community schools, as well as acting as the fiscal officer for start up community schools in their first year of operation.

As part of its assistance, the Lucas County Educational Service Center persuaded legislators to increase special education funding for community schools during the 1998-1999 school year. Three of the five community schools in Lucas County serve primarily special needs students.

In 1999, under Am. Sub. H.B. 282, the Lucas County Educational Service Center was no longer "required by law" to provide technical assistance to sponsoring school boards or community schools. However, the General Assembly continued to appropriate $200,000 to the Lucas County Educational Service Center for this purpose for the 2000-2001 biennium.

Despite the lack of a mandate, the Lucas County Educational Service Center continues to provide technical assistance to the community schools in its area. The Lucas County Educational Service Center distributes a handbook to every proposed community school, and provides a variety of workshops to community schools in various stages of development. As a means of keeping community school administrators informed of state and federal laws, innovations, and implementation issues from other community schools, the Lucas County Educational Service Center sends quarterly newsletters and holds monthly meetings for all of the community school directors and principals in Lucas County.

The Ohio Department of Education

Most of the 15 community schools were dissatisfied with the technical assistance provided by the Ohio Department of Education during the 1998-1999 school year. Community school directors indicated that ODE appeared to handle community schools through trial and error. No one person was able to answer all questions; some community school directors felt bounced around among various ODE divisions, and the directors felt they received few solid answers.

Few resources. One reason for the poor technical assistance was that during the 1998-1999 biennium, the General Assembly did not appropriate any additional funding for this purpose and ODE did not reprioritize its spending to accommodate the administration of community schools. Rather, ODE placed these responsibilities upon one of its existing offices, with two staff members assigned part-time to the community schools initiative.

Most community schools seemed to accept that ODE was generally overworked and understaffed during the 1998-1999 school year. As one community school director commented, ODE operated at a "frantic" pace to provide community schools with technical assistance.

Among the ten community schools sponsored by the State Board of Education, all contracts were signed within two months of the school opening. Directors felt rushed, wished they "had more time to do things," and that "not knowing until the last minutes" made the planning process difficult. Because the length and complexity of the application process reduced the amount of time available for marketing their schools, some founders felt this hurt teacher and student recruitment.

In addition to struggling with the application process, several directors expressed that they did not always know where to go and whom to contact for help, especially for such tasks as getting DPIA, Title I, and special education funding. They also struggled with submitting EMIS data, obtaining legal assistance, and understanding the business aspects of the planning process.

ODE unprepared. LOEO found that ODE was not prepared to handle community schools during the first year of operation, which contributed to the poor technical assistance that community schools received during the 1998-1999 school year.

ODE has historically provided funding, oversight, and technical assistance to traditional public schools. Even though community schools are public, they differ from traditional schools in many ways — governance, funding, organizational structure, and legal requirements. Because of these differences, ODE could not simply assume "business as usual" when working with community schools.

Special education is an example of how the traditional educational structure can not simply be applied to community schools. Few guidelines currently exist regarding

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how students with special needs should be served by community schools. The law pertaining to community schools and special education is only two sentences long. "A community school established under Chapter 3314 of the Revised Code shall be considered a school district for the purposes of this chapter" (ORC §3323.012). Community schools are required "to comply with all federal and state laws regarding the education of handicapped students." (ORC §3314.06(D)). The laws simply apply all the same responsibilities that currently apply to school districts to community schools, without taking into account the unique structure and financing of community schools.

Many questions exist around special education services in community schools. Can community schools serve children with special needs without funding from a local tax base to supplement what the state provides? Are community schools responsible for the transportation needs of special education students, given that transportation is a related service of a child's Individualized Education Program (IEP)? Must a community school follow an IEP created by the child's former school district? To date, there have been no administrative rules or ODE guidance manuals to help answer the many questions pertaining to community schools and special needs students.

Improvements since the first year. After the 1998-1999 school year, Am. Sub. H.B. 282 required ODE to create the Office of School Options. It appropriated $400,000 each fiscal year for the office to provide advice and assistance to all of Ohio's community schools (including those in Lucas County), sponsors of community schools, and to persons or groups considering proposing a community school. Since the beginning of the 1999 2000 school year, the Office of School Options has offered several workshops with information on community school law, the application process, funding and federal assistance, EMIS, special education issues, audits, professional development, and SchoolNet.

Most directors of community schools sponsored by both the Lucas County Educational Service Center and the State Board of Education believe their access to technical assistance has improved since the first year of operation. Several community school directors indicated that ODE has been easier to reach, very helpful in resolving problems, and better overall at providing information on how to implement programs.

LOEO anticipates that community schools are likely to require substantial and continuing technical assistance in:

- Acquiring facilities;
- Submitting EMIS information;
- Preparing annual reports;
- Submitting required financial statements ;
- Understanding legal liabilities;
- Providing special education;
- Acquiring additional state and federal funds;
- Developing curricula; and
- Aligning educational goals, instructional strategies, and assessment approaches in ways that demonstrate public accountability.

LOEO anticipates that ODE will need to think about the unique nature of community schools as it continues to expand upon the assistance it provides them.

Accountability of Community Schools

One of the central tenets of the charter school movement is greater autonomy (fewer rules and regulations) in exchange for greater accountability. Community schools have accepted the challenge of being accountable for student performance as part of the contracts with their sponsors. All community schools are required in their contract to have an assessment and accountability plan that outlines specific learning and performance objectives for students and how these objectives will be assessed.

As a specific goal, 14 out of 15 community schools stated that at least 75% of their students will pass all sections of the Ohio Proficiency Tests or Off-Grade Proficiency Tests. The one school that did not include proficiency test scores as an outcome (M.O.D.E.L.) exclusively enrolls special needs students, all of whom are exempt from proficiency testing. Some other academic and performance objectives mentioned by community schools in their contracts included:

- All students passing teacher-constructed tests at no less than 80% accuracy;
- Student drop-out rates of no greater than 3%;
- Attendance rates of at least 93%;
- Graduation rates, or annual grade promotion rates, of no less than 95%;
- All students acquiring and applying skills and knowledge at grade level; and
- Seventy-five percent of students successfully completing individual education goals.

To assess the degree to which students meet their objectives, community schools listed in their contracts numerous assessment tools and measures including norm- and criterion-referenced tests, student progress reports, attendance records, student portfolios, and parent surveys.

Forms of accountability

In Ohio, there are five mechanisms to ensure that community schools remain accountable to their students, parents, staff, sponsor, and the public at large. As previously described, these include:

1. Annual reports produced by the community school;
2. Annual report cards produced by ODE;
3. Financial audits conducted by the Auditor of State;
4. Contract renewal and termination; and
5. Parental choice.

Too little time has elapsed for three of the five accountability mechanisms to occur. ODE's annual report cards are still being designed and no community school may receive a report card until it has operated for two full school years. The financial audits require an entire fiscal year to pass; the Auditor of State is just beginning to conduct financial audits of the 15 community schools that operated during the 1998-1999 school year.

All but one of the 15 community schools has a five-year contract with its sponsor; therefore, none of the schools are up for contract renewal. The only two mechanisms that have been fully implemented are parental choice and the annual reports prepared by the community schools.

Parental choice. As these 15 community schools began their second year of operation, some parents appear to have already begun exercising choice. According to data reported by community schools, eleven had waiting lists that accumulated during the 1998-1999 school year. Numbers on these waiting lists ranged from five to 327 students; percentages ranged from 11% to 240% of the school enrollment.

Annual reports. All 15 community schools submitted an annual report to LOEO. These reports ranged from one to 28 pages in length. Most school founders and directors missed the deadline for submitting these to LOEO (some as late as two months past the date specified in their contract). Many indicated they were unaware of the reporting requirement, the dates the reports were due, and to whom they needed to send copies.

Based upon follow-up conversations with community school directors, it was unclear to LOEO how many of these schools had actually sent their annual reports to parents. LOEO knew for certain that two schools had sent and that six schools had not sent their annual reports to parents; LOEO was unsure regarding the remaining five schools. Though failing to disseminate such a report may have been merely an oversight on the part of community schools, this does raise the question of how community schools are accountable to parents and to the community.

LOEO found it difficult to interpret these first year annual reports due to differences in content and the lack of substance contained in these reports. Many of the problems with the reports could be due to the schools' first year of operation. Much of the variation may have been due to the uniqueness and individuality of community schools, administrative turnover within some community schools, differences in contracts and reporting expectations between sponsoring agencies, or the lack of clearly stated guidelines.

The law requires community schools to document the extent to which they are making progress in meeting their academic goals. Although community schools perceived themselves as achieving their goals and intended student outcomes after their first year of operation, most failed to provide any supporting data or evidence in their annual reports.

Although most community schools stated in their contracts that they would disseminate surveys and questionnaires to parents and other community members to assess levels of satisfaction, only three community schools had actually done so, according to the annual reports.

Few schools (other than the three designed for students with special needs) described how they linked specific evaluation and assessment approaches to their instructional approaches and how they measured the extent to which they achieved their academic goals and student outcomes.

Most community schools included either budget spreadsheets or summary tables of their finances in their annual reports. Few schools included an analysis or explanation of their financial data.

From this first year of implementation, most community schools seemed to view their annual reports as an afterthought, rather than as a benchmark of school performance, as envisioned by the General Assembly. Further, it appears that directors and founders of community schools were not familiar with their responsibilities stated in law and within their contracts regarding the accountability role of these annual reports.

LOEO recognizes that these are the first annual reports produced by community schools and anticipates improvements in the future. However, as a principal accountability mechanism for community schools, improving these reports is essential to parents, students, staff, sponsors, LOEO, and the public.

Chapter V
Conclusions and Recommendations

This final chapter offers LOEO's conclusions about the challenges and issues faced by the 15 community schools in their first year of operation. It also offers recommendations on implementation issues.

LOEO found that the first 15 community schools have been successful in opening and operating despite four main struggles during their first year: inadequate and untimely funding, delays in finding facilities, transportation difficulties, and mixed levels of technical assistance. In addition to these struggles, LOEO found problems with the annual reports used for accountability purposes.

Many of the funding problems that existed during the 1998-1999 school year have been resolved through changes in legislation and improved practices by the Ohio Department of Education (ODE). LOEO expects that community schools will experience fewer funding related problems during future school years.

Although five of the 15 community schools that opened during the 1998-1999 school year experienced difficulties in finding a facility, they managed to open their doors. However, at least ten other new community schools postponed opening for the 1999-2000 school year due to facility problems. LOEO expects to continue evaluating this issue over the next several years.

LOEO found that the community schools in Lucas County rated the technical assistance of the Lucas County Educational Service Center favorably. However, most of the 15 community schools were dissatisfied with the technical assistance provided by the Ohio Department of Education during the 1998-1999 school year. ODE's poor technical assistance stemmed from being understaffed and unprepared to handle the unique nature of community schools. Even though most community schools believe that ODE has improved its technical assistance during the 1999-2000 school year, LOEO anticipates that ODE will need to think about the unique nature of community schools as it continues to expand upon the assistance it provides to them.

Of all the struggles and issues identified, LOEO concludes that changes need to be made in the areas of transportation and accountability, in order for this school choice initiative to continue.

Accountability

In exchange for fewer rules and regulations, community schools have accepted the challenge of being accountable for the academic performance of their students. After the first year of implementation, community schools are attracting the interests of parents. The lists of students waiting to enroll in community schools ranged from 11% to 240% of a school's total enrollment during the course of the 1998-1999 school year. Enrollments increased for all of the original 15 schools as they began their second year. Thus, in one sense, the schools appear to be accountable in appealing to the wishes of parents. Parents are beginning to exercise choice in public education and perceive community schools as a viable option.

Another means of accountability, however, is the requirement that all community schools prepare and submit annual reports to their sponsors, parents, and LOEO. Ohio law requires a community school to provide information on its activities, financial status, and progress in meeting the academic goals and performance standards as set forth in its contract.

Based on the first-year reports, there is little evidence that community schools provided the necessary information for future accountability. Few schools provided evidence supporting the claims that they met their educational goals. Nor did they document how they linked instructional practices, assessment, and evaluation to measure student progress. In addition, there is little evidence that most community schools assessed the satisfaction levels of parents as promised, nor were they accountable to parents by disseminating the annual reports.

Most founders and directors of community schools were not familiar with their responsibilities regarding annual reports as stated in the community school law and their contracts. Community school sponsors appeared to be equally unfamiliar with their legal responsibilities, and provided little assistance and oversight to the preparation of the annual reports.

LOEO recognizes that these are the first annual reports produced by community schools. However, community schools and their sponsors need to improve upon the quality of the annual reports in order to meet their contractual agreements and be held accountable.

LOEO recommends community schools:

- Become familiar with and adhere to the community school law and contractual agreements regarding accountability.
- Develop a strategy for measuring and providing clear evidence of the extent to which their stated educational goals and student outcomes are accomplished.
- Assess parent satisfaction and develop strategies to gather and analyze feedback from parents, when they have contractually promised to do so.

LOEO recommends sponsors of community schools:

- Become familiar with community school law and hold community schools responsible for accountability measures.
- Provide clearly written guidelines to each community school for annual reports, including expectations of content and deadlines for completion and dissemination.
- Expect clearly stated performance standards from each community school upon which the sponsor will evaluate the success of the school.

Transportation

For the majority of community schools, transportation of students continues to be an issue affecting their daily operation. Many community schools feel that school districts have been unresponsive, late, or remiss in their legal responsibility to provide transportation to community school students.

School districts, on the other hand, view the transportation of community school students as a costly and logistically difficult mandate given their own fiscal constraints, the geographical dispersion of community school students, and the lateness with which community schools submit their rosters of students in need of transportation.

Complicating matters further are several unresolved and disputed questions including:

- What responsibilities do school districts have in transporting special needs students across district boundaries to a community school?
- Who pays the transportation costs for a new community school student who has an existing Individualized Education Program (IEP) from a traditional public school, which stipulates transportation as a related service? Does the former school district provide transportation? Or, does the community school provide it?
- Does the legislative mandate to "provide transportation" to community school students mean that the district can simply issue passes for community school students to ride on local or regional public transportation buses?
- What happens if the school district responsible for providing transportation lacks the fiscal resources to provide it?

These unresolved transportation issues have contributed to the strained relationship between community and traditional public schools and are likely to become more contentious as additional community schools open in the future.

LOEO recommends the Ohio General Assembly:

- Provide a timely remedy to address the transportation problems expressed by both community schools and traditional school districts. LOEO anticipates that more than one solution may be needed to resolve these transportation problems.

  Possible courses of action include:

  1. Continue to require local districts to transport community school students, but enact *explicit* legislation about the conditions when they *must* do so, conditions under which they *may* employ other alternatives, and the conditions which would *exempt* them from this requirement. These conditions would include distances, number of special needs students, financial condition of the district, district attendance lines, numbers of students, time of day stipulations, and whether the community school is a "start-up" or a conversion school.

  2. Continue to require local school districts to transport community school students, but provide districts with supplementary funds for purchasing or leasing additional buses.

  3. Absolve school districts from the obligation to transport community school students and provide stable funds to community schools for transporting their own students. Among the questions to be addressed in pursuing this option is how much money community schools should receive (bearing in mind that school districts are currently reimbursed for only a portion of their total transportation costs), and what transportation services would be available to community schools in rural areas?

  4. Allow community schools to determine whether or not they want to transport their own students or have the school district transport them, and fund community schools and school districts accordingly.

Regardless of the course of action the Ohio General Assembly takes, more state-level data are needed to assess the costs associated with transporting community school students. Districts are currently required to report the number of public and nonpublic school students they transport as well as the type of transportation they receive, the number of miles they are transported, and the cost. Currently, information about community school students is aggregated along with that of traditional public school students, making it difficult to assess the cost of this separate group of students.

LOEO recommends the Ohio Department of Education:

- Require districts to separate community school students from their own when reporting transportation data.

Appendices

Appendix A
Selected Bibliography

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Appendix B
Thirty-one Components of Community School Contracts
(ORC §3314.03)

Community schools' contracts may differ in their formats and organization. However, the following thirty-one components must be specified in the contract.

1. The community school must be established as a nonprofit corporation.

2. A detailed description of the school's educational programming must be provided, including the school's mission, focus of the curriculum, and the types, ages, and grades of the students the school is expected to attract.

3. A list of the academic goals to be achieved and the methods of measurement that will be used to determine progress toward those goals, which must include the statewide proficiency tests.

4. Performance standards by which the success of the school will be evaluated by the sponsor.

5. Admission standards, as defined by ORC §3314.06.

6. Dismissal procedures for students.

7. An explanation of the ways in which the school will achieve racial and ethnic balance reflective of the community it serves.

8. Requirements and procedures for financial audits to be conducted by the Auditor of State. The community school's financial records must be maintained in the same manner as are financial records of school districts, pursuant to the rules of the Auditor of State.

9. A description and location of the facilities to be used by the school. All facilities must meet with health and safety standards established in law for school districts.

10. Qualifications of teachers, including a requirement that the school's classroom teachers are certified according to state standards.

11. The school must provide a minimum of 920 hours of instruction to a minimum of 25 students per school year.

12. The governing authority will purchase liability insurance, or otherwise provide for the potential liability of the school.

13. The school will be nonsectarian in its programs, admission policies, employment practices, and all other operations. A sectarian school or religious institution will not operate the school.

14. The school must agree to comply with various sections of the Ohio Revised Code. (See the laws listed in Appendix C.)

15. The school must agree to comply with Ohio's Ethics Law, except that a member of the school's governing board may be an employee of the school and/or have an interest in a contract into which the governing board enters.

16. The school must comply with the state's graduation requirements (including passage of the 9th grade proficiency tests), except that the student must successfully complete the curriculum adopted by the governing board of the community school rather than the state specified curriculum.

17. The school must submit an annual report of its activities and progress in meeting its academic and financial goals. The report must be provided to the school's sponsor, parents, and the Legislative Office of Education Oversight (LOEO). Furthermore, the school must collect and provide any data that LOEO requests in furtherance of any study.

18. Arrangements for providing health and other benefits to employees.

19. The length of the contract, starting at the beginning of the academic year and not exceeding five years.

20. The governing authority of the school.

21. A detailed financial plan that estimates the school's budget and per pupil expenditures for each year of the contract. The financial plan must specify the base formula amount that will be used for the purposes of funding calculations (e.g., basic aid and Disadvantaged Pupil Impact Aid).

22. A detailed plan regarding the arrangement of employees of the school in the event the contract is terminated.

23. Specify whether the school is a conversion or start-up. If the school is a conversion, specify how the community school will handle employees of the school district (e.g., collective bargaining).

24. Specify procedures for resolving disputes between the sponsor and the school's governing board.

25. Specify a policy for admitting students who reside outside the district in which the school is located (a policy similar to inter-district open enrollment). The policy must

do one of three things: one, prohibit the enrollment of students outside the district in which the school is located; two, permit the enrollment of students who reside in districts adjacent to the district in which the school is located; or three, permit the enrollment of students who reside in any other district in the state.

26. Describe the process by which the school's governing authority will be selected in the future.

27. Specify the management and administration of the school.

28. If the community school is a conversion (therefore an existing public school), explain what alternative arrangements will be made for current students who choose not to attend and for teachers who choose not to teach in the school.

29. Describe in detail the school's instructional program and educational philosophy.

30. Describe in detail the school's internal financial controls.

31. If the community school contracts any services of its sponsor, the contract must specify that the sponsor is authorized to receive payments from the community school.

Appendix C

OHIO LEGISLATIVE SERVICE COMMISSION

RESEARCH MEMORANDUM **R-123-1217**

John Rau *August 11, 1999*

LAWS FROM WHICH COMMUNITY SCHOOLS ARE EXEMPT AND SPECIFICALLY NOT EXEMPT

"Community schools," authorized by Chapter 3314. of the Revised Code, are public non-profit, non-sectarian schools established to operate independently of any school district. There are two possible kinds of community schools: "start-up" schools, which are new schools, and "conversion" schools, which are existing public schools that school districts have consented to converting to community schools. These special schools are exempt from many of the education laws of the state.

The first, and longer, part of this memo lists requirements from which the community schools are exempt. The second part lists those laws that specifically apply to community schools.

Requirements from which community schools are exempt

Revised Code Reference:	**Description:**
124.01 et seq.	Civil Service Law (related to nonteaching employees in city school districts)
133.01 et seq.	Uniform Bond Law other than parts on issuing bonds secured by tax revenues
Chapter 135.	Uniform Depository Act related to the handling of public funds
149.351 and 149.41	Requirements on retention of school records and establishing a records commission

3301.07	State Board minimum standards covering school curriculum; locally developed competency based programs; the assignment of professional personnel according to training and qualifications; instructional materials and equipment, including library facilities; proper organization, administration, and supervision of schools; buildings and grounds (other than any building health and safety standards); admission and promotion of students; driver education courses; phonics instruction; instruction in energy and resource conservation; reporting requirements; ratios of teachers to pupils; and ratios of support personnel to pupils.
3301.072	Training requirements for school treasurers and business managers
3301.073	Required receipt of State Board technical assistance in school budgeting and finances
3301.079	25 pupil class size limit for bilingual multicultural classes
3301.0712	Required receipt of services under any educational service center plan of service
3301.0715	Requirements for locally developed competency based education programs in composition, mathematics, science, citizenship, and reading
3301.16	School chartering requirements
3301.17	Driver education course standards
3301.52-3301.59	Preschool program standards and licensing (other than parental access rights)
Chapter 3302.	Educational standards for school districts
Chapter 3311.	Requirements related to the formation and territory of school districts and educational service center financing districts
3311.29	Requirement to maintain grades kindergarten through twelve
3313.01-3313.17 and 3313.18	Requirements related to the membership, organization, and operation of school boards

3313.174	Requirement to appoint a business advisory council
3313.20	Requirement to make rules necessary for the governing of employees, students, and other persons entering a school; to post the school entry rules; and to have a written policy on employees' attendance at professional meetings
3313.201	Requirement to purchase liability insurance (though the community schools law has its own provision requiring a community school to purchase liability insurance (3314.03(11)(b)))
3313.202	Requirements related to the provision of life, health, accident, and legal insurance benefits for school district employees
3313.208	Latchkey program operating requirements
3313.211	Requirement to pay full-time employees while on jury duty
3313.22-3313.32	Requirements related to the appointment, conduct, and duties of school district treasurers
3313.35	Requirements concerning who is legal counsel for school boards
3313.372	Requirements related to installment payment contracts for energy conservation measures for school facilities
3313.373	Requirements related to shared-savings contracts for energy savings measures for school facilities
3313.41	Disposal of real and personal property requirements
3313.44	Real and personal property tax exemption for school districts
3313.46 (and related sections in Chapter 153.)	Competitive Bidding Law regarding school building projects
3313.47	Vesting of management and control of schools in the board of education
3313.471	Prohibition related to the presentation of career information to students by the armed forces

3313.48	Standards for minimum school year and minimum school day (although the act requires community schools to provide 920 hours of instruction annually); requirement that education be provided free of charge (though the act prohibits a community school from charging tuition)
3313.481	Requirements related to alternative school calendars
3313.482	Contingency plan requirement for making up calamity days
3313.483, 3313.487-3313.4810	Prohibition against closing schools for financial reasons; requirements and procedures related to school financial crises and resulting loans
3313.49	Student assignment requirements when a school is suspended
3313.51	Check writing and deposit requirements related to school treasurers
3313.53	Requirements related to employing certificated persons for pupil-activity programs
3313.531 and 3313.532	Adult high school continuation program requirements
3313.534	Requirement for "zero-tolerance" discipline policies; requirement that Big 8 and certain other school districts establish alternative schools
3313.536	Requirement to adopt comprehensive school safety plan
3313.55	Requirements related to schooling for persons with tuberculosis
3313.56	Part-time schooling requirements for programs provided to students with age and schooling certificates
3313.60	School course of study requirement (except that the parental right to excuse a child from certain instructional topics would continue to apply)
3313.601	Prohibition against barring teachers from providing periods for programs or meditation on moral, philosophical, or patriotic themes (except that the parental right to excuse a child from these programs would continue to apply)

3313.602(A)	Requirement to have a policy regarding the recitation of the pledge of allegiance to the flag
3313.603	High school curriculum requirements
3313.604	Recognition of American Sign Language as a foreign language in schools
3313.605	Implementation requirements for schools electing to offer community service education programs under federal law
3313.608	"Fourth grade guarantee"
3313.609	Requirements to retain certain chronic truants
3313.6011	Requirement that venereal disease education, which is a component of health education, emphasize sexual abstinence
3313.62	Definitions of "school year," "school month," and "school week"
3313.63	Specification of school holidays
3313.64 and 3313.65	School admission requirements related to the payment of tuition; tuition payment and charging requirements between school districts
3313.642	Requirement for certain districts to furnish needy students with materials used in a course of instruction other than the necessary textbooks or electronic textbooks
3313.646	Prohibitions related to school district's establishing preschool programs
3313.671	Prohibition against allowing a student to remain in school longer than 14 days without submitting immunization records or evidence that immunization is in progress (except that the parent right to excuse a child from immunization for religious reasons would continue to apply)
3313.70	Prohibition against appointment of a school board member as school physician, dentist, or nurse

3313.713	Requirements related to administering prescription drugs to students (except that the parent right to have a school administer prescription drugs to a child only after requesting it in writing would continue to apply)
3313.714	Requirement, upon request from the Department of Human Services, to operate a "healthcheck" program for students covered by Medicaid (except that the parent right to excuse a child from a healthcheck examination would continue to apply)
3313.75	Prohibition against renting or leasing a school building so as to interfere with the public schools of the district or for any purpose other than authorized by law
3313.751	Prohibition against students smoking in any area controlled by a school board; requirement that a school board have a disciplinary policy to enforce the smoking prohibition
3313.752	Requirement that a warning about anabolic steroids be posted in school locker rooms
3313.76-3313.79	Requirements related to the use of school buildings by the public when not being used for school purposes
3313.81	Requirements related to food service operations and meals for the elderly
3313.811	Prohibition against the sale of anything for profit on school premises unless all profits are used for a school purpose or for a school activity
3313.813	State Board of Education standards for school food programs (except that any health or safety standards related to school facilities would continue to apply)
3313.814	Requirement for school boards to have a policy governing the types of food sold to students on school premises
3313.82 and 3313.83	Requirements related to a school savings program for students
3313.841 and 3313.842	Requirements related to sharing certain services cooperatively with other districts and operating joint education programs

3313.843	Requirements related to receiving services provided by educational service centers
3313.85	Requirement that the probate court or in some cases the educational service center perform functions that a school board fails to perform
3313.871	Fee limits for school district participation in accrediting associations
3313.90, 3313.91, and 3313.911	Vocational education requirement
3313.92	Requirements related to joint construction projects between school districts
3313.93	Prohibition against students being paid for work in a school district occupational work adjustment laboratory from being considered employees for purposes of school employee retirement law, nonteaching employee contract law, unemployment compensation law and workers' compensation law (apparently meaning that students in such a program operated by a community school would be considered employees and, therefore, presumably would be subject to whatever law is applicable to other community school employees)
3313.94	Annual school progress report requirement
3313.941	Requirement to include a "multiracial" category in any statistics on race gathered for state or school district purposes
3313.95	Contract requirements for police services in alcohol and drug prevention programs
3313.97	Intradistrict open enrollment requirements (except the requirement that parents receive information about the program--presumably in the district in which the community school is located--would continue to apply)
3313.98 and 3313.981	Interdistrict open enrollment requirements (except the requirement that parents receive information about the program would continue to apply)

3315.02-3315.05	Requirements related to the administration of funds for bond indebtedness (other than bonds secured by tax revenues. which community schools are prohibited from issuing)
3315.062	Requirements related to the provision and funding of student activity programs
3315.07	Requirements related to the publishing of school materials for the public: prohibition against using public funds to support or oppose the passage of a school levy or bond issue or to compensate any district employee for time spent on supporting or opposing a levy or bond issue
3315.08	Requirements related to the payment of employee salaries and the administration of a payroll account
3315.09	Limitation of only a one-year contract with a college or museum for the provision of instructional programs to students
3315.091	Requirements and limitations related to contracting with a driver training school for the provision of driver education
3315.10	Requirements related to the management and control of certain property held in trust for educational purposes
3315.11-3315.14	Requirements related to establishing and administering a school building replacement fund
3315.15	Requirements related to school board service funds for paying school board member's expenses in the performance of their duties
3315.17	Requirement to maintain a Textbook and Instructional Materials Fund
3315.18	Requirement to maintain a Capital and Maintenance Fund
3315.29-3315.31 (and related 501.01-501.14)	Requirements related to common school funds
3315.37	Requirements related to school district teacher education loan programs

3315.40-3315.42	Requirements related to establishing and maintaining a school district education foundation fund
3317.01	Requirements for the receipt of state education funds, including levying 20 mills, providing instruction for the minimum number of school days, and paying teachers according to the state minimum teachers salary schedule; requirement to comply with all school law and state board rules in order to participate in the state basic aid funding program
3317.011-3317.0214	Requirements that school districts be paid specified amounts of state funds (section 3314.08 establishes a method of calculating the amount of state funding for community schools)
3317.03 and 3317.033	Requirements related to reporting school average daily membership and maintaining school records
3317.04	Funding requirements related to the transfer of school district territory or the consolidation of districts
3317.06	Funding, requirements, and prohibitions related to auxiliary services for chartered nonpublic schools
3317.061, 3317.063, and 3317.064	Requirement to annually report licensed employees to the State Board
3317.07	Funding for school bus purchases
3317.08-3317.082	Tuition calculation requirements
3317.11	Any requirements to receive services from an educational service center (formerly county school boards)
3317.12	Nonteaching employee salary schedule requirement
3317.13	State minimum teachers salary schedule requirement
3317.14	School district teachers salary schedule requirement
3317.15	Requirements specifying the number of speech-language pathologists and school psychologists a school district must hire

3317.62-3317.64	Requirements related to loans from the lottery profits education fund under certain circumstances
Chapter 3318.	School Facilities Law
3319.01 and 3319.011	Requirements related to school superintendent employment
3319.02	Requirements related to employment of assistant superintendents, principals, assistant principals, and other administrators
3319.03-3319.06	Requirements related to employment of school business managers
3319.07, 3319.08, and 3319.09-3319.111	Teacher employment and contract requirements
3319.071	Prohibition against requiring teachers to participate in professional development programs
3319.072	Teacher lunch period requirement
3319.073	Teacher in-service training requirement in child abuse prevention
3319.081-3319.087	Employment requirement for nonteaching employees
3319.088	Educational aide employment requirements
3319.10	Substitute teacher employment requirements
3319.12	Annual professional staff salary notice requirements; requirements related to the transfer of administrators to other positions
3319.13-3319.143	Leave of absence requirements for teachers and nonteaching employees, including professional development leave, sick leave, military leave, personal leave, and assault leave
3319.15	Teacher termination of contract requirements
3319.16 and 3319.161	School board termination of teacher contract requirements
3319.17	Reduction in teaching force requirements

3319.18 and 3319.181	Requirements related to employment of teachers and nonteaching employees when school district territory is transferred or districts are consolidated
3319.21	Prohibition against a school board participating in a contract employing a relative of a school board member; requirement that these contracts and any contracts in which a board member has a pecuniary interest are void
3319.32	Student record keeping requirements
3319.322	Student photograph requirements for student records
3319.33	Statistical reporting requirements to the State Board
3319.35 and 3319.37	Penalties and consequences for failure to submit reports to the State Board
3319.36	Prohibition against paying a nonlicensed teacher (except teachers in community schools must be licensed under 3319.22-3319.31)
3319.41	School corporal punishment policy requirements and authorization
3319.45	Requirement that school principal report certain offenses committed by students
3321.02-3321.12	Requirements related to the enforcement of student compulsory attendance law; requirements related to students with age and school certificates
3321.13	Reporting requirements related to a child withdrawing from school; requirement to report certain withdrawn students to the Registrar of Motor Vehicles (except that, if a report on a child is made to the Registrar, the parent's right to a notice of the child's right to a hearing would continue to apply)
3321.14-3321.38	Compulsory School Law enforcement requirements (except that the parent's right to certain warnings for failure to send a child to school, in 3321.19 and 3321.20, would continue to apply)
Chapter 3324.	Identification of gifted children and development of service plan

3327.01-3327.05	Student transportation requirements (section 3314.09 requires school districts to transport its students to community schools in the same manner districts are required to transport students to other schools)
3327.06	Tuition collection requirements and provisions related to the unauthorized attendance of students
3327.08	Competitive Bidding Law regarding school bus purchases
3327.09	Motor vehicle insurance requirement (though community schools must provide for liability insurance)
3327.11	Requirements related to paying the cost of a student's room and board in certain circumstances
3327.13	Requirements related to leasing buses for transporting students to and from school
3327.14	Requirements related to providing transportation for senior citizen and adult education groups
3327.15	Restrictions on use of school vehicles out of state
3327.16	Requirements related to volunteer bus rider assistance programs; requirement to provide school bus rider instruction programs
3329.01-3329.08	All requirements related to the selection and purchase of school textbooks and electronic textbooks
3329.09	Requirements related to the accessibility and distribution of textbooks to students (except the parent's right to buy textbooks for a child at no more than 10% over the school district's cost would continue to apply)
3329.10	Prohibition against a superintendent, supervisor, principal, or teacher acting as a school textbook sales agent
Chapter 3331.	Requirements related to the issuing and administration of age and school certificates (except the parental right, under 3331.13, to obtain a child's school records upon request for purposes of an age and school certificate would continue to apply)

Title 35 (various sections)	Elections Law related to school board elections and elections on tax levies and bond issues
4739.04	Unless this requirement is considered to be a facility safety issue, the requirement to employ a licensed boiler operator under certain circumstances
5705.29	Requirements for school district Budget Reserve Fund ("Rainy Day Fund")
5705.391	Requirements for five-year projections of school district revenues and expenditures
5705.412	Requirement to attach certificate of available resources to school district appropriation measures, contracts, and purchase orders

Requirements from which community schools are NOT exempt

Revised Code Reference:	**Description:**
Chapter 102.	Ohio Ethics Law (except that a member of a community school governing board specifically may also be an employee of the board and may have an interest in a board-executed contract)
109.65, 3313.672, and 3313.96	Requirements for missing children reporting, information, and student fingerprinting
Chapter 117.	State fiscal auditing requirements
121.22	The Public Meetings ("Sunshine") Law
149.43	The Public Records Law
Chapter 1347.	Ohio Privacy Law
2151.358	Procedures pertaining to school records of adjudicated delinquents after their court records are expunged
2151.421	Child abuse reporting requirements
2313.18	Employment protection for employees on jury duty
Chapter 2744.	The Sovereign Immunity Law for public employees
3301.0710 and 3301.0711	Statewide proficiency testing
3301.0714	Education Management Information System (EMIS) requirements
Chapter 3307.	State Teachers Retirement System
Chapter 3309.	School Employees Retirement System
3313.50	Record requirements relating to student hearing and vision testing
3313.602(D)	Requirement that each school devote one hour to observance of Veteran's Day

3313.61 and 3313.611	Requirement to award diplomas to students passing the ninth-grade proficiency tests and completing the high school curriculum (Community schools are not subject to the Revised Code's curriculum requirements. They set their own curricula.)
3313.643	Requirement that students and teachers wear industrial eye protection in certain industrial courses or activities
3313.66, 3313.661, and 3313.662	Student suspension, expulsion, and permanent exclusion requirements
3313.67	Requirement to keep records of student immunizations
3313.672	Requirement to request records from a child's previous school
3313.673	Screening of new kindergartners and first-graders in hearing, vision, speech and communication, and health
3313.69	Requirement to include hearing and vision screening if school opts to have any dental and medical screening
3313.71	Tuberculin testing requirements
3313.716	Requirement that public schools permit students to self-administer asthma medication
3313.80	Requirement to display the national flag
3319.321	Requirements for confidentiality of student information
3319.39	Requirements for criminal records checks of job applicants
3321.01	Requirements relating to admittance of children to kindergarten and first grade
Chapter 3323.	Requirements related to special education
3327.10	School bus driver qualifications
Chapter 3365.	Requirement to participate in Post Secondary Enrollment Options Program

	3365.041 Requirement that governing authority of a community school that expels a student notify the pertinent higher education institution that the student attends under the Post Secondary Enrollment Options Program
4111.17	Ohio Equal Pay Law (anti-discrimination related to wages)
Chapter 4112.	Ohio Civil Rights Act
4113.52	Ohio Whistleblower Law
Chapter 4117.	The state Collective Bargaining Law
Chapter 4123.	Workers' Compensation Law
Chapter 4141.	Unemployment Compensation Law
Chapter 4167.	State Occupational Safety and Health Law

In addition, community schools must comply with any laws or rules that "grant certain rights to parents" and with health and safety standards established by law for school buildings.

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Appendix D
Profiles of 1998-1999 Community Schools

Introduction

This appendix summarizes information about each of the 15 community schools that began operation in the 1998-1999 school year. A profile is provided for each school in terms of:

- **Numbers and demographics.** Key facts about the school's students, grade spans, and staffing.
- **Key features.** The Legislative Office of Education Oversight's (LOEO) interpretations of the school's rationale for opening, educational approach, distinctive characteristics, and challenges.
- **Annual report messages.** A summary of the principal messages expressed in the school's annual report on its progress and accomplishments during the first year of operation.

Definitions

Numbers and demographics

- **Enrollments.** The 1998-1999 enrollment numbers were taken from each school's October count of students as submitted via the state's Educational Management Information System (EMIS). The 1999-2000 enrollment numbers are also from EMIS and are current as of October, 1999. Both sets of data report student head counts.
- **Salaries.** These are the average annual salaries of all the certified teachers reported for each community school, across 15 community schools, and for the six corresponding city school districts in which the community schools are located. Salary data are derived from the FY 1999 staff employment data submitted by schools via EMIS. The average teacher salary reported for each community school and the corresponding districts was calculated by dividing the total annual salary of classroom teachers by the total full time equivalent of these same teachers.
- **Years of experience.** These are the average number of years teaching experience reported for each community school, for 15 community schools, and for the six corresponding city school districts in which the community schools are located. The experience levels of teachers are derived from the FY 1999 staff demographic data submitted by schools via EMIS. The figures reported represent the total years of teaching experience for each community school (and for the six corresponding districts as a whole) divided by total teacher full time equivalent.
- **Race/ethnicity.** These data are taken from the FY 1999 October counts as reported via EMIS. The "other" category includes students classified as: Hispanic, Asian or Pacific Islander, American Indian or Alaskan Native, or Multicultural.

- **Age-grade levels.** These numbers were derived from FY 1999 October counts as reported via EMIS, and include grades K to 12 (including handicapped kindergartners) as well as students classified as ungraded.

- **Students per teacher.** This statistic is computed by dividing the total full time equivalent of students without disabilities by the total teacher full time equivalent of non-special education classroom teachers. For the three special needs schools (JADES Academy, M.O.D.E.L., and Vail Meadows CHOICE), students with disabilities and special education teachers were added into the calculations. Data used in these calculations were derived from the FY 1999 October count of students and the FY 1999 October staff employment and demographic files in EMIS.

Key features

These features come from several sources: the community school's application to its sponsor, LOEO's site visits and interviews at each school; EMIS data; the school's annual report; and other correspondence and communications with the school during its first year of operation. The key features include:

- **Rationale for opening.** Why was this community school founded? Expressed here is the principal reason this school came into existence and the aspirations the school holds for its students.

- **Educational approach.** What is this school's core philosophy and strategy about the teaching and learning process?

- **Distinctive characteristics.** Compared to all of the 15 community schools that began in the 1998-1999 school year, what are some of the unique and noteworthy things about this particular school?

- **Challenges.** All community schools will face challenges in the years ahead simply because they are new and, of necessity, "learning as they go." The points expressed here are LOEO's inferences about the particular challenges likely to be faced by each school in the future.

Annual report messages

Although the annual reports prepared by the community schools differed widely in style, length, and substance, each expressed claims about its first year's progress and accomplishments. In the interests of brevity and uniformity, we limited the "messages" for each school to five or six statements that LOEO felt captured the essence of what the school said about its accomplishments.

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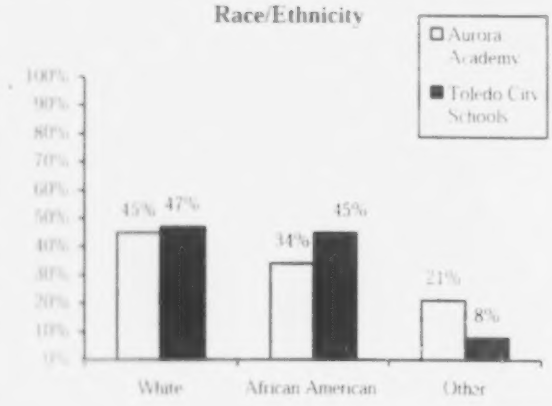
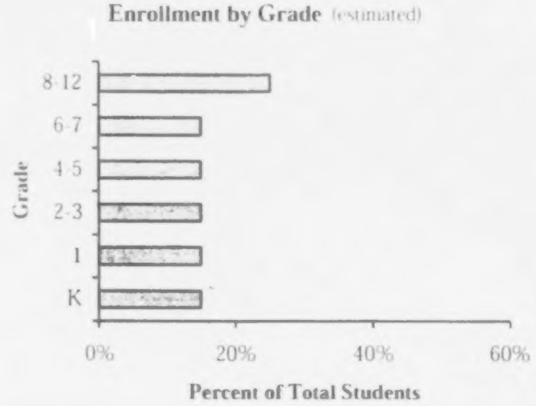
Aurora Academy

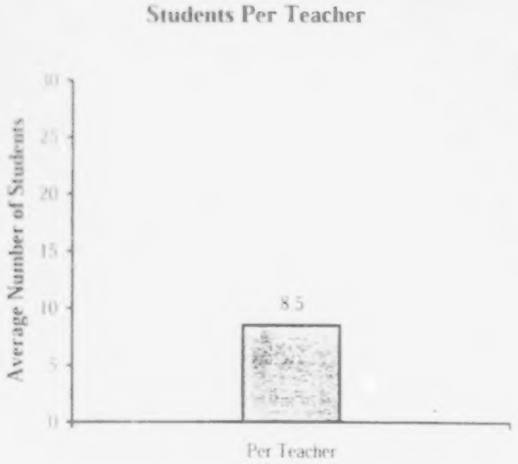
Basic Information

- **School name and address:** Aurora Academy, 541 Utah Street, Toledo, OH 43605
- **Director:** Martu Flashman
- **Sponsor:** Lucas County Educational Service Center
- **Grade span and student enrollments:** 1998-1999 - K-12, 85 students; 1999-2000 - K-12 230 students (Note: Because this school uses an ungraded approach, these grade levels are estimated from the students' ages.)
- **Facility:** Old (circa 1920), unused Catholic school, sprawling masonry building; located in inner-city Toledo.
- **Governance:** Five-person board (friends of school's founder, a parent, and three University of Toledo professors). The founder and director served on the board, but resigned after the 1998-1999 school year. ,The new director does not serve on the board.
- **Ohio House and Senate Districts:** House – 50 Senate – 11

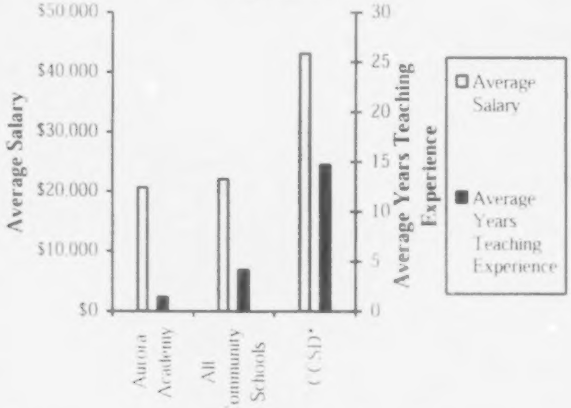
Numbers and Demographics
1998-1999


Race/Ethnicity


Enrollment by Grade (estimated)


Students Per Teacher

Average Teacher Salary and Years Experience



*These are the six Corresponding City School Districts.

Aurora Academy

Rationale for opening

- The founder believes that students must remain at the center of what schools do and that schools must prepare students for lifelong success. There is concern that traditional public school bureaucracies are unable to keep the student at the core of what they do.

Educational approach

- Interdisciplinary teaching approach across curricular areas.
- All subject areas are based on published curricula; each is used to complement Ohio's Model Curriculum and its alignment with Ohio Proficiency Tests.
- Integration of the fine arts across all curricular areas.

Distinctive characteristics

- The teaching and learning approaches were strongly influenced by the "hands on" presence of the school's founder and director during the 1998-1999 school year, who resigned before the 1999-2000 school year.
- Students are placed in non-graded, multi-aged categories from Primary (ages 5-7) through Senior (ages 15 and over).
- Year-round school: nine weeks of school, followed by two weeks off.
- Curriculum is geared towards passage of Ohio Proficiency Tests.
- Of the 15 community schools, the teachers are in the lowest third in terms of experience.

Future challenges

- Establishing new policies and approaches, given that original founder and director resigned after first year.
- Maintaining good working relationships with Toledo City Schools – a relationship characterized as hostile during the first year.
- Maintaining relatively uniform class sizes, given school policy that students must pass proficiency test to advance to next highest level.

Annual report messages (Self-reported)

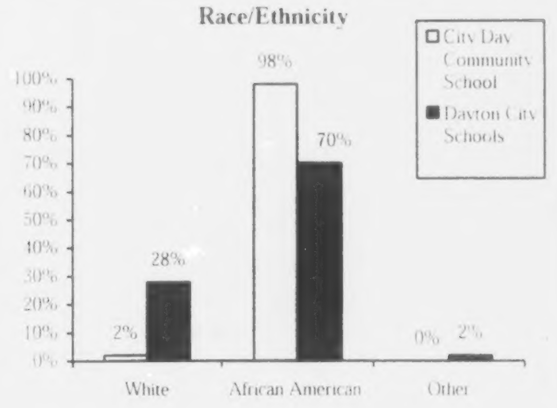
- An educational diagnostic assessment was conducted on each student at the beginning of the year, and where applicable, an Individual Education Program (IEP) was developed from the results.
- A baseline working paper was completed by each student at the beginning of each term and placed in the student's folder to indicate progress.
- Teachers maintained a Pupil Performance Objective list on each student designed to address the learning outcomes of state proficiency tests.
- Students took the 4th, 6th, 9th, and 12th grade Ohio Proficiency Tests.
- The curriculum was integrated with the fine arts.

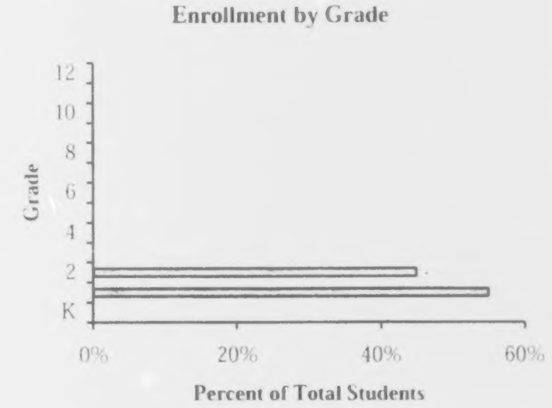
City Day Community School

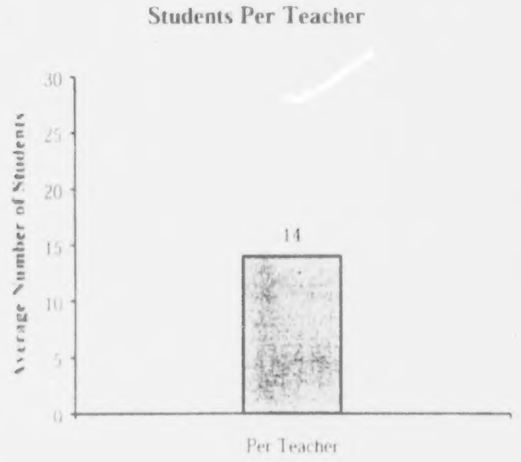
Basic Information

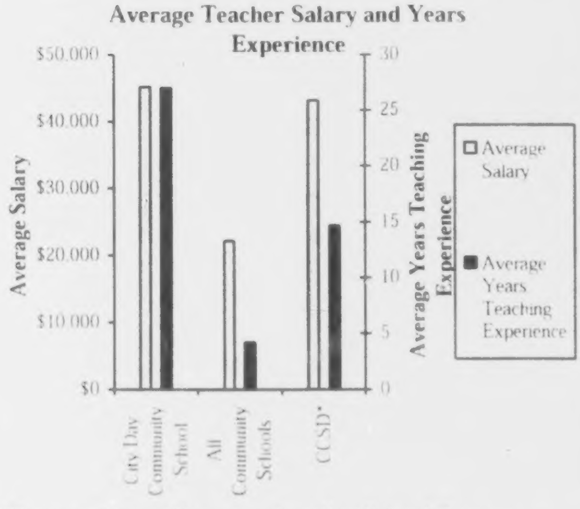
- **School name and address:** City Day Community School, 318 South Main, Dayton, OH 45402
- **Director:** Jane Dixon
- **Sponsor:** State Board of Education
- **Grade span and student enrollments:** 1998-1999 – grades 1- 2, 56 students; 1999-2000 - grades K- 3, 233 students
- **Facility:** Moved from old downtown hotel with limited space in the 1998-1999 school year to a modernized social services building with more space for classrooms, offices, and gymnasium for the 1999-2000 school year. Located in downtown Dayton.
- **Governance:** The school's four teachers (during 1998-1999) comprise the four-person board. One of these teachers is the principal and founder of the school.
- **Ohio House and Senate Districts:** House - 38 Senate - 5

Numbers and Demographics
1998-1999


Race/Ethnicity


Enrollment by Grade


Students Per Teacher


Average Teacher Salary and Years Experience

*These are the six Corresponding City School Districts.

City Day Community School

Rationale for opening

- Students must be grounded in the fundamentals (especially literacy) to succeed in school. Four veteran teachers set out to teach and motivate students to master the basics. They wanted to establish a school environment removed from the many administrative layers that they believe create problems in traditional public schools.

Educational approach

- Emphasis on reading (literacy) as key to success in school.
- Maximum latitude for teachers, free from administrative burdens and restrictions.
- Ensuring that each student succeeds, regardless of that student's strengths and weaknesses upon entering the school.

Distinctive characteristics

- Highest paid and most experienced teachers of all community schools (combined, the four teachers have over 100 years of teaching experience).
- Emphasis on reading (literacy).
- Promises to parents that their children *will* become successful readers.
- Highest percent (316%) enrollment growth of 15 community schools (from 56 students in 1998-1999 to 233 students in the 1999-2000 school year).

Future challenges

- Staying free from administrative layering that could constrain teacher flexibility and creativity, while meeting the many administrative demands necessary for demonstrating fiscal and academic accountability.
- Accommodating high demand and rapid enrollment growth.

Annual report messages (Self-reported)

- The students presented an outstanding closing of the year program to parents and friends in which they used everything they were taught in their special interest areas (i.e. music, sign language, foreign language, and dance).
- The school dedicated their library in memory of a student who was killed in a bus accident that year.
- During the year the school was successful in obtaining additional funds through state programs and private grants.
- Dr. Michael A. Williams was hired to coordinate and provide school counseling, school psychology, and special education services.
- The school was moved to a larger facility due to growth and expansion.
- City Day has expanded for the 1999-2000 school year to include 300 students and the addition of kindergarten and third grade.

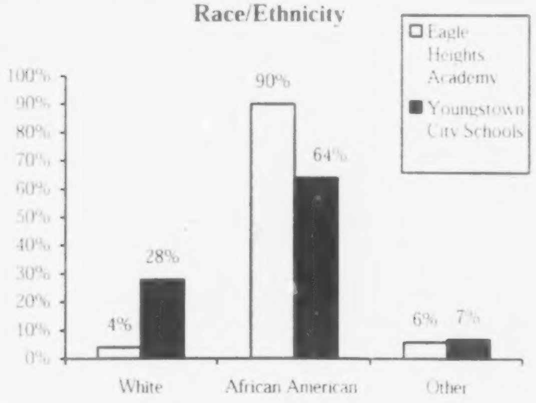
Eagle Heights Academy

Basic Information

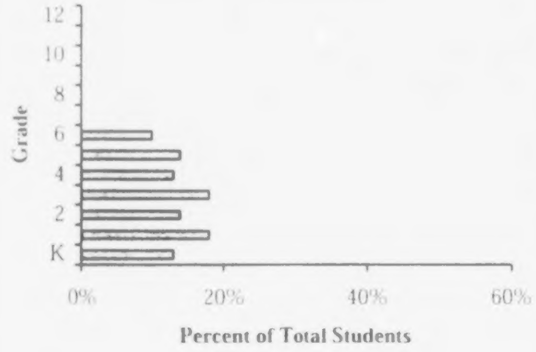
- **School name and address:** Eagle Heights Academy, 1833 Market Street, Youngstown, OH 44507
- **Director:** James LaRiccia
- **Sponsor:** State Board of Education
- **Grade span and student enrollments:** 1998-1999 - grades K - 6, 623 students; 1999-2000 - grades K – 7, 715 students
- **Facility:** Large school building (circa 1920), former Youngstown high school closed due to declining district enrollments. Located near inner city Youngstown.
- **Governance:** Six-person board (three pastors, attorney, financial consultant, and regional association director). The board was selected by the trustees of the Eagle Heights Academy, which consists of five Youngstown pastors, including the three pastors on the board. The principal was selected by the board and serves at its pleasure.
- **Ohio House and Senate Districts:** House - 64 Senate - 33

Numbers and Demographics
1998-1999

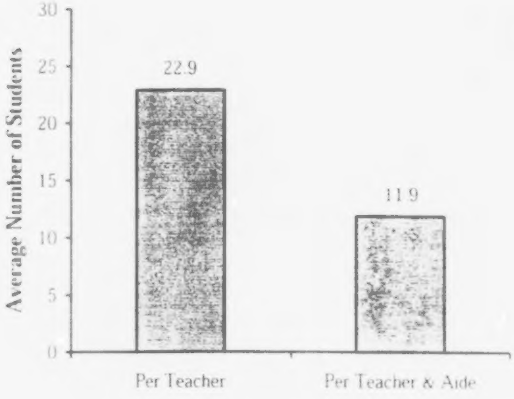
Race/Ethnicity



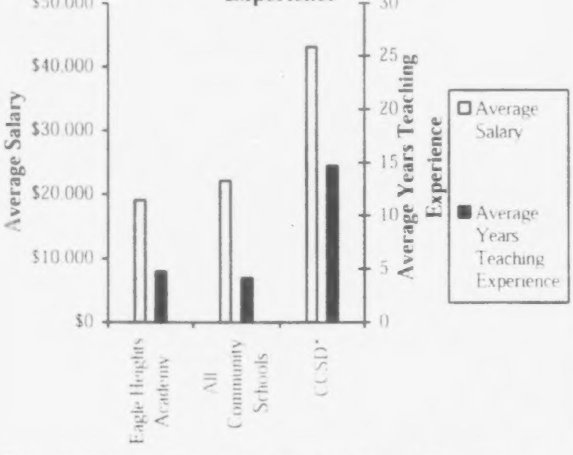
Enrollment by Grade



Students Per Teacher / Teacher & Aide



Average Teacher Salary and Years Experience



*These are the six Corresponding City School Districts.

Eagle Heights Academy

Rationale for opening

- Five influential African American pastors, concerned about Youngstown's deteriorating educational and economic conditions, founded this school in hopes of revitalizing Youngstown and its schools. The school aims to provide both intellectual and moral development for urban students.

Educational approach

- All schools operated by White Hat Management, Inc. use a competency-based education (CBE) approach. CBE includes detailed curricular goals that spell out student competencies across all subject areas, which are reflected in teachers' daily lesson plans. Pupil Performance Objectives (PPO) specify, for each student, the behavior to be achieved, the condition for demonstrating the behavior, and the criterion (or level) of competency by which the behavior is to be expressed.
- The competency-based approach is augmented by use of a computer-assisted instruction program (Jostens Learning®) that paces and monitors the progress of each student.
- Other emphases include character education, cooperative learning, and an accelerated learning program.
- Although this school is managed by White Hat Management, Inc., (which runs the four HOPE schools) this principal was hired by, and reports, to the school's founders. He exercises more latitude than is typical in the other schools managed by White Hat Management, Inc.

Distinctive characteristics

- Founded by African American pastors, influential in the Youngstown community.
- Parents and other community members contributed very large "in-kind" donations to renovate this large, old school building.
- School's intent is to contribute to revitalization of the city and its schools.
- Largest community school enrollment (600+), over twice the size of next largest school.
- Has the largest waiting list of all community schools.

Future challenges

- Balancing business-like efficiency with meeting the varied needs of low-achieving urban youth.
- Maintaining positive and reciprocal beneficial relationships with a city school system beset with educational and economic problems.
- Leveraging school reform as a strategy to revitalize a deteriorating community.

Annual report messages (Self-reported)

- A Pupil Education Plan was written for each student. This plan delineated an individual program for each student according to his/her ability, achievement, and needs.
- The results from the Iowa Test of Basic Skills, WRAT Test, Ohio Proficiency Tests, and Comprehensive Assessment Test (Jostens Learning® computer test) were used to establish a baseline for each student. Fourth and 6th grade students took the Ohio Proficiency Tests.
- Students were given opportunities to enjoy success from self-exploratory behavior and participation in "active" learning.
- Parents provided positive responses to a satisfaction questionnaire.

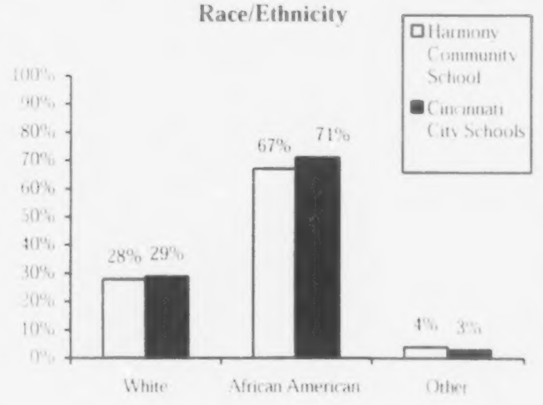
Harmony Community School

Basic Information

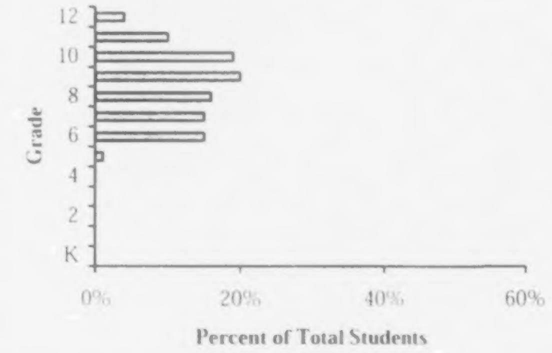
- **School name and address:** Harmony Community School, 7030 Reading Road, Cincinnati, OH 45237
- **Director:** David Nordyke
- **Sponsor:** State Board of Education
- **Grade span and student enrollments:** 1998-1999 - grades 5 - 12, 201 students; 1999-2000 - grades 5 - 12, 398 students
- **Facility:** Large converted department store in largely vacant shopping mall located in inner-city area. The school is an "open-landscape" design, where students can see and hear all other students most of the time.
- **Governance:** A six person "Management Cabinet" comprises the board. Members come from a variety of backgrounds, including: banking, insurance, finance, education, ministry, higher education and accounting. A separate, 25 member "Accountability Cabinet" composed of parents and community members ensures that the school meets its performance goals. The director does not sit on the cabinets, but says that he has "veto power" over the decisions of either cabinet.
- **Ohio House and Senate Districts:** House - 30 Senate - 9

Numbers and Demographics
1998-1999

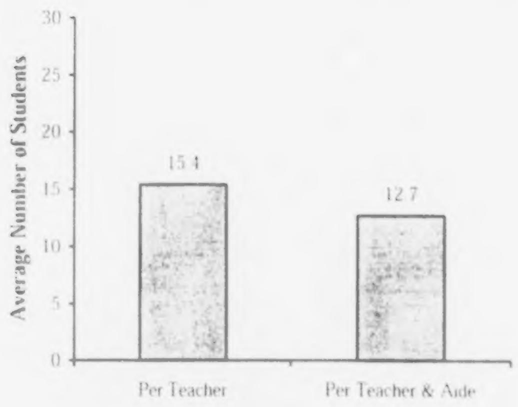
Race/Ethnicity



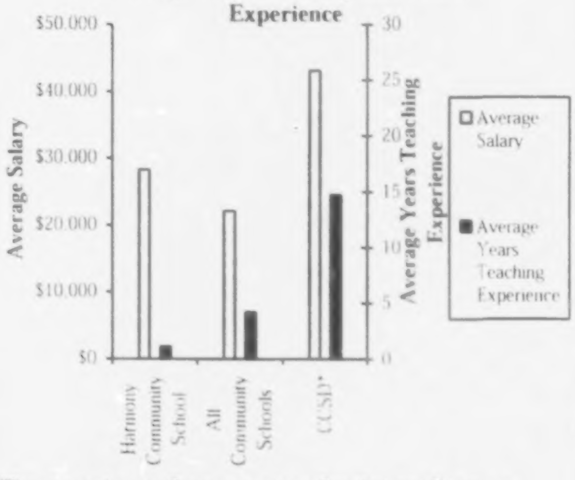
Enrollment by Grade



Students Per Teacher / Teacher & Aide



Average Teacher Salary and Years Experience



*These are the six Corresponding City School Districts.

Harmony Community School

Rationale for opening

- Urban youth must have intensive and distinctive interventions that engage them in their own learning. This school emphasizes five core habits essential for learning: perseverance, organization, compassion, attention to detail, and positive attitude. It is felt that traditional public schools cannot provide the intensive intervention necessary for urban youth.

Educational approach

- Belief that effective teaching is an artistic process that engages and provokes students to accept responsibility for their own learning.
- Eclectic mix that includes: self-paced learning, computer-assisted instruction, project learning, cooperative learning, and teacher-led discussions.
- Learning strategies are influenced by belief that urban youth are far more likely to be right-brained learners.

Distinctive characteristics

- The "open landscape" conversion of a large department store has nearly all teachers and students within sight and earshot of each other.
- Given the director's penchant for flexibility and autonomy, this school is likely to be the first to challenge state regulations seen as unnecessarily restrictive to its educational philosophy and approach.
- This school has the oldest student population among the 15 community schools.
- Largest number of new enrollments for the 1999-2000 school year among the 15 community schools (197 additional students).

Future challenges

- Given older urban students with poor learning habits and achievements, the school has relatively little time to improve their academic habits and performance before they graduate.
- The school seeks to have maximum latitude and flexibility to innovate, but must do so within the rules and structures under which all public schools must operate.
- Finding strategies to engage urban youth with histories of poor academic performance in ways that motivate and attune to their learning styles.

Annual report messages (Self-reported)

- Maintained an attendance rate of 94%, achieving their goal of 93%.
- Maintained a dropout rate of 1%, achieving their goal of no more than 3%.
- Administered the 9th Grade Proficiency Test. Students who had previously failed all sections of the test did pass at least one section.
- Every student and faculty person at Harmony was given a learning style preference and locus of control survey (70% of both students and faculty preferred to use the right side of their brain for learning).
- The school ended the 1998-1999 school year with a $582,692 cash balance.
- Two members of the Management Cabinet, the oversight body for the financial management of the school, and an independent accountant, reviewed the financial procedures that were in operation for the 1998-1999 school year and made recommendations.

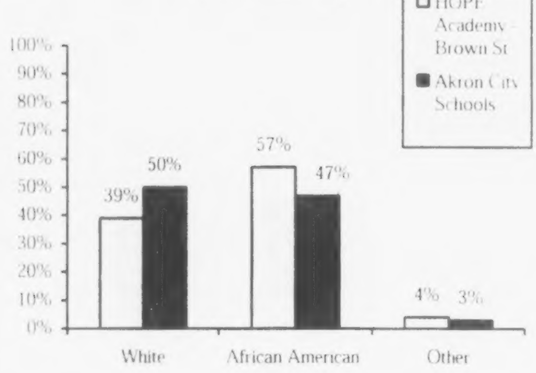
HOPE Academy - Brown Street Campus

Basic Information

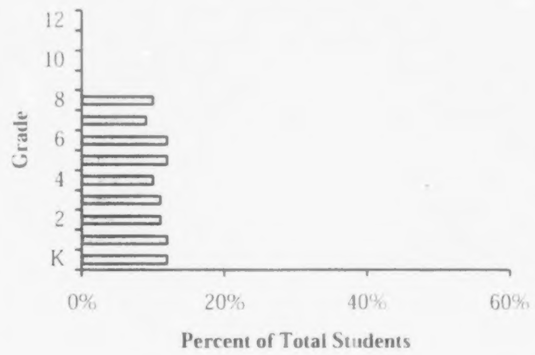
- **School name and address:** HOPE Academy - Brown Street Campus, 1035 Clay Street, Akron, OH 44301
- **Director:** Karen Vernon
- **Sponsor:** State Board of Education
- **Grade span and student enrollments:** 1998-1999 - grades K - 8, 248 students; 1999-2000 - grades K - 8, 270 students.
- **Facility:** Former Catholic school, vacant before acquired as community school for HOPE Brown Street. Old, masonry structure located near downtown Akron.
- **Governance:** The four-member board (real estate, law, and business) was formed by White Hat Management, Inc., which operates the four HOPE schools. This same board is the governing entity for HOPE Academy - University Campus in Akron.
- **Ohio House and Senate Districts:** House - 47 Senate - 27

Numbers and Demographics
1998-1999

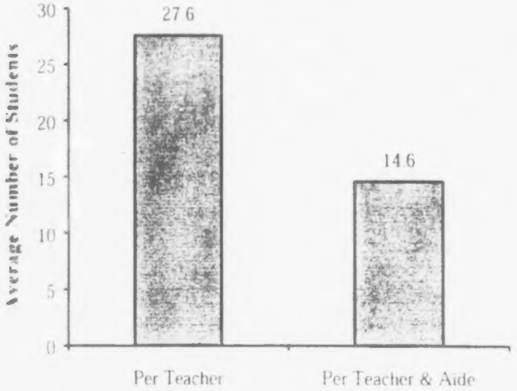
Race/Ethnicity



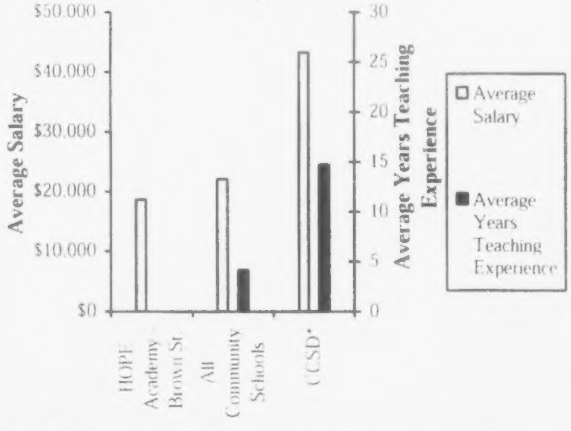
Enrollment by Grade



Students Per Teacher / Teacher & Aide



Average Teacher Salary and Years Experience



*These are the six Corresponding City School Districts.

HOPE Academy – Brown Street Campus

Rationale for opening

- The school's founders felt that they can provide safe learning environments, offer quality educational programs, and demonstrate performance accountability in educating urban students. They believe that a business-like approach to educational planning is necessary for efficient and profitable operations. Because such planning is lacking in traditional public schools, those schools are unable to provide effective education in most urban settings.

Educational approach

- All schools operated by White Hat Management, Inc. use a competency-based education (CBE) approach. CBE includes detailed curricular goals that spell out student competencies across all subject areas, which are reflected in teachers' daily lesson plans. Pupil Performance Objectives (PPO) specify, for each student, the behavior to be achieved, the condition for demonstrating the behavior, and the criterion (or level) of competency by which the behavior is to be expressed.
- The competency-based approach is augmented by use of a computer-assisted instruction program (Jostens Learning®) that paces and monitors the progress of each student.

Distinctive characteristics

- Extensive use of computer-assisted instruction; uses Jostens Learning® lesson planning.
- A four-person governing board was convened by a for-profit management company (White Hat Management, Inc.), yet this board is to oversee the management company that runs this community school. This same board governs HOPE's University Campus in Akron.
- Of the 15 community schools, the teachers have the least experience and are in the lowest third of salary levels.
- Largest student to instructional staff (teachers plus aides) ratio among the 15 community schools (14.6 to 1).

Future challenges

- Maintaining a business like approach to managing the school while adapting to the many problems faced by urban youth.
- Maintaining individualized approaches while striving to bring all students to acceptable levels of proficiency standards.
- Ensuring efficient and effective use of computer-augmented curriculum and lesson plans.

Annual report messages (Self-reported)

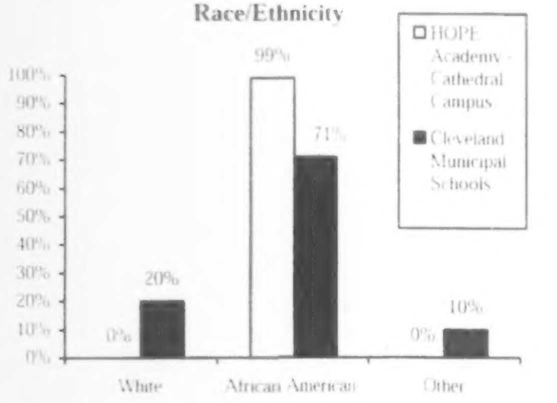
- A Pupil Education Plan was written for each student. This plan delineated an individual program for each student according to his/her ability, achievement, and needs.
- The results from the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills, WRAT Test, Ohio Proficiency Tests, and Comprehensive Assessment Test (Jostens Learning® computer test) were used to establish a baseline for each student. Fourth and 6th grade students took the Ohio Proficiency Tests.
- Students were given opportunities to enjoy success from self-exploratory behavior and participation in "active" learning.
- The school maintained an average daily attendance of 94.1%.

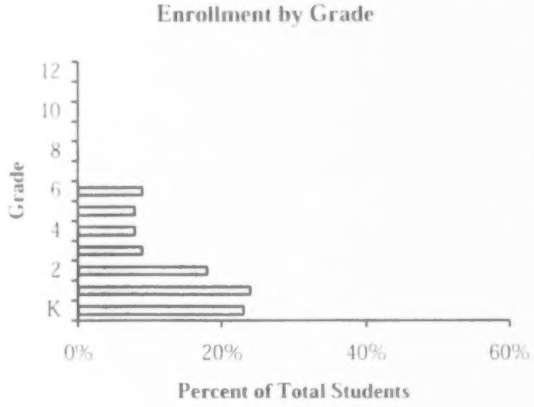
HOPE Academy – Cathedral Campus

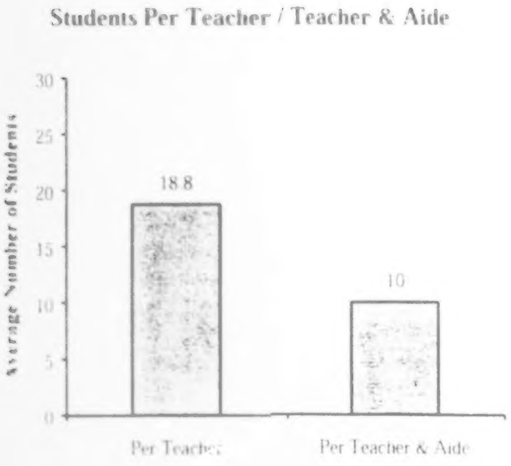
Basic Information

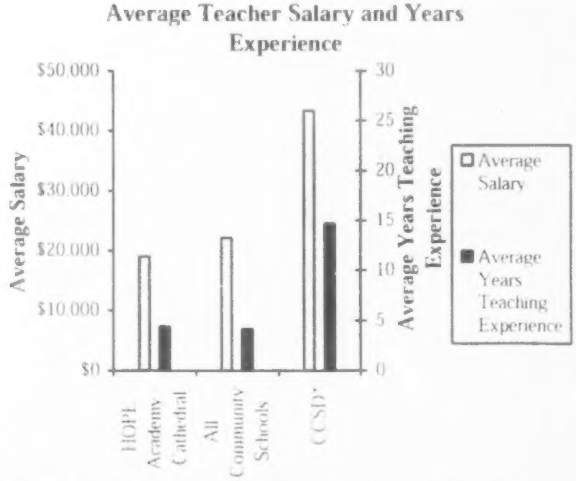
- **School name and address:** HOPE Academy – Cathedral Campus, 10615 Lamontier Avenue, Cleveland, OH 44104
- **Director:** Terrance Wilson
- **Sponsor:** State Board of Education
- **Grade span and student enrollments:** 1998-1999 - grades K - 6, 319 students; 1999-2000 - grades K - 7, 413 students
- **Facility:** Old, masonry structure located near Cleveland's inner city. In the 1997-1998 school year, this building housed a chartered, nonpublic religious school before being acquired by White Hat Management, Inc to become a community school.
- **Governance:** White Hat Management, Inc., which operates the four HOPE schools, formed the three-member board (city treasurer, court bailiff, and parent). This same board is the governing entity for HOPE Academy – Chapelside Campus in Cleveland.
- **Ohio House and Senate Districts:** House - 10 Senate - 21

Numbers and Demographics
1998-1999


Race/Ethnicity


Enrollment by Grade


Students Per Teacher / Teacher & Aide


Average Teacher Salary and Years Experience

*These are the six Corresponding City School Districts.

HOPE Academy – Cathedral Campus

Rationale for opening

- The schools founders felt that they can provide safe learning environments, offer quality educational programs, and demonstrate performance accountability in educating urban students. They believe that a business-like approach to educational planning is necessary for efficient and profitable operations. Because such planning is lacking in traditional public schools, those schools are unable to provide effective education in most urban settings.

Educational approach

- All schools operated by White Hat Management, Inc. use a competency-based education (CBE) approach. CBE includes detailed curricular goals that spell out student competencies across all subject areas, which are reflected in teachers' daily lesson plans. Pupil Performance Objectives (PPO) specify, for each student, the behavior to be achieved, the condition for demonstrating the behavior, and the criterion (or level) of competency by which the behavior is to be expressed.
- The competency-based approach is augmented by use of a computer-assisted instruction program (Jostens Learning®) that paces and monitors the progress of each student.

Distinctive characteristics

- Extensive use of computer-assisted instruction; uses Jostens Learning® lesson planning.
- A three-person governing board was convened by a for-profit management company (White Hat Management, Inc.), yet this board is to oversee the management company that runs this community school. This same board governs HOPE's Chapelside Campus in Cleveland.
- Of the 15 community schools, the teachers are in the lowest third of salary levels.

Future challenges

- Maintaining a business like approach to managing the school while adapting to the many problems faced by urban youth.
- Maintaining individualized approaches while striving to bring all students to acceptable levels of proficiency standards.
- Ensuring efficient and effective use of computer-augmented curriculum and lesson plans.

Annual report messages (Self-reported)

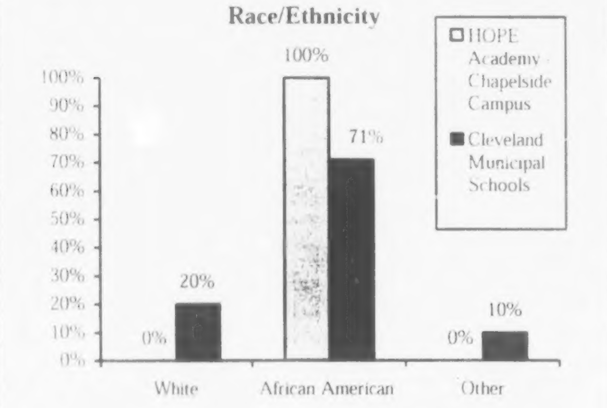
- A Pupil Education Plan was written for each student. This plan delineated an individual program for each student according to his/her ability, achievement, and needs.
- The results from the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills, WRAT Test, Ohio Proficiency Tests, and Comprehensive Assessment Test (Jostens Learning® computer test) were used to establish a baseline for each student.
- Students were given opportunities to enjoy success from self-exploratory behavior and participation in "active" learning.
- The school maintained an average daily attendance of 93.7%.

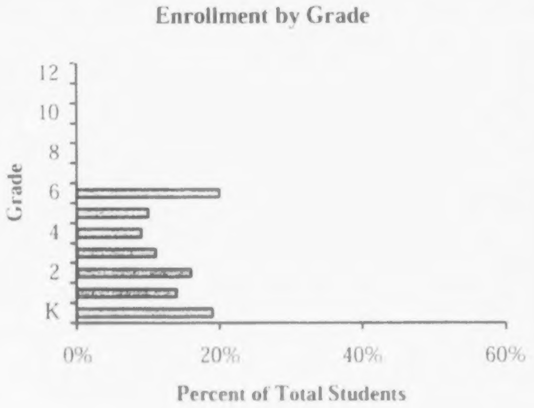
HOPE Academy – Chapelside Campus

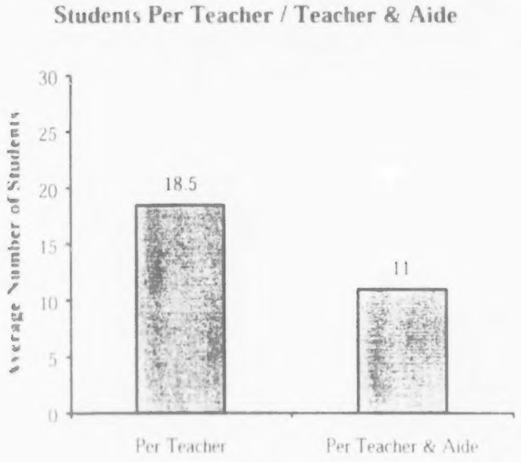
Basic Information

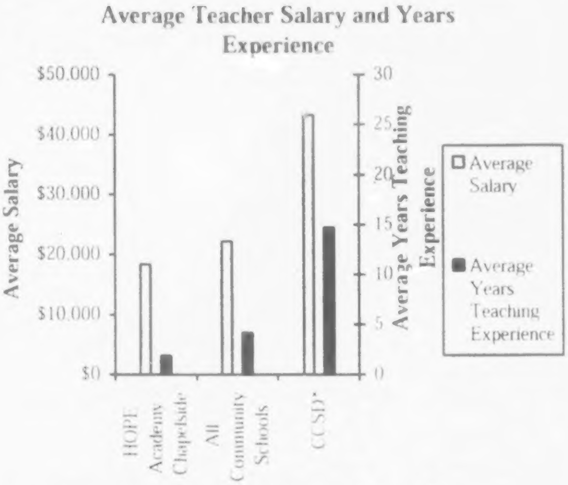
- **School name and address:** HOPE Academy - Chapelside Campus, 3845 East 131st Street, Cleveland, OH 44120
- **Director:** Allen Lindsey
- **Sponsor:** State Board of Education
- **Grade span and student enrollments:** 1998-1999 - grades K – 6, 296 students; 1999-2000 - grades K – 6, 340 students
- **Facility:** Old masonry structure, located near inner city Cleveland. In the 1997-1998 school year, the building housed a chartered Catholic school in the Cleveland Diocese before being acquired by White Hat Management, Inc as a community school.
- **Governance:** The three-member board (city treasurer, court bailiff, and parent) was formed by White Hat Management Inc., which operates the four HOPE schools. This same board is the governing entity for HOPE Academy – Cathedral Campus in Cleveland.
- **Ohio House and Senate Districts:** House - 12 Senate - 25

Numbers and Demographics
1998-1999









*These are the six Corresponding City School Districts.

HOPE Academy – Chapelside Campus

Rationale for opening

- The school's founders felt that they can provide safe learning environments, offer quality educational programs, and demonstrate performance accountability in educating urban students. They believe that a business-like approach to educational planning is necessary for efficient and profitable operations. Because such planning is lacking in traditional public schools, those schools are unable to provide effective education in most urban settings.

Educational approach

- All schools operated by White Hat Management, Inc. use a competency-based education (CBE) approach. CBE includes detailed curricular goals that spell out student competencies across all subject areas, which are reflected in teachers' daily lesson plans. Pupil Performance Objectives (PPO) specify, for each student, the behavior to be achieved, the condition for demonstrating the behavior, and the criterion (or level) of competency by which the behavior is to be expressed.
- The competency-based approach is augmented by use of a computer-assisted instruction program (Jostens Learning®) that paces and monitors the progress of each student.

Distinctive characteristics

- Extensive use of computer-assisted instruction; uses Jostens Learning® lesson planning.
- A three-person governing board was convened by a for-profit management company (White Hat Management, Inc.), yet this board is to oversee the management company that runs this community school. This same board governs HOPE's Cathedral Campus in Cleveland.
- Of the 15 community schools, the teachers are in the lowest third of salary levels.

Future challenges

- Maintaining a business like approach to managing the school while adapting to the many problems faced by urban youth.
- Maintaining individualized approaches while striving to bring all students to acceptable levels of proficiency standards.
- Ensuring efficient and effective use of computer-augmented curriculum and lesson plans.

Annual report messages (Self-reported)

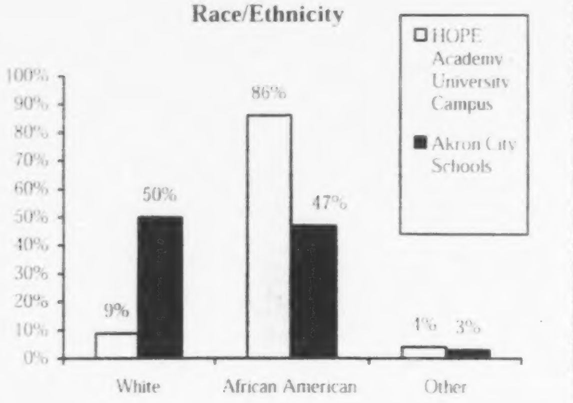
- A Pupil Education Plan was written for each student. This plan delineated an individual program for each student according to his/her ability, achievement, and needs.
- The results from the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills, WRAT Test, State Proficiency Tests, and Comprehensive Assessment Test (Jostens Learning® computer test) were used to establish a baseline for each student.
- Students were given opportunities to enjoy success from self-exploratory behavior and participation in "active" learning.
- The school maintained an average daily attendance of 93.2%.

HOPE Academy – University Campus

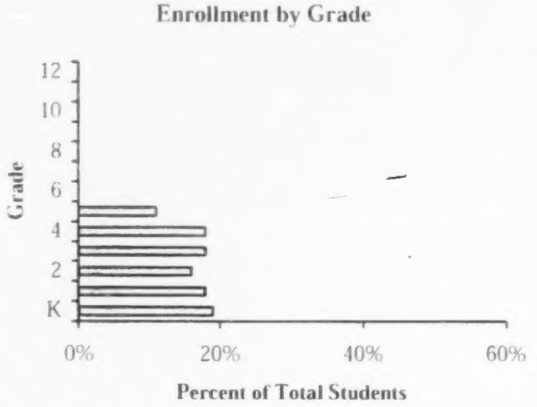
Basic Information

- **School name and address:** HOPE Academy - University Campus, 220 South Broadway, Akron, OH 44308
- **Director:** Cherez Gilbert
- **Sponsor:** State Board of Education
- **Grade span and student enrollments:** 1998-1999 - grades K - 5, 137 students; 1999-2000 - grades K - 6, 171 students
- **Facility:** Old masonry structure, located in downtown Akron. In the 1997-1998 school year, the building housed a chartered, nonpublic religious school before being acquired by White Hat Management, Inc to become a community school.
- **Governance:** White Hat Management, Inc., which operates the four HOPE schools, formed the four-member board (real estate, law, and business). This same board is the governing entity for HOPE Academy - Brown Street Campus in Akron.
- **Ohio House and Senate Districts:** House - 47 Senate - 27

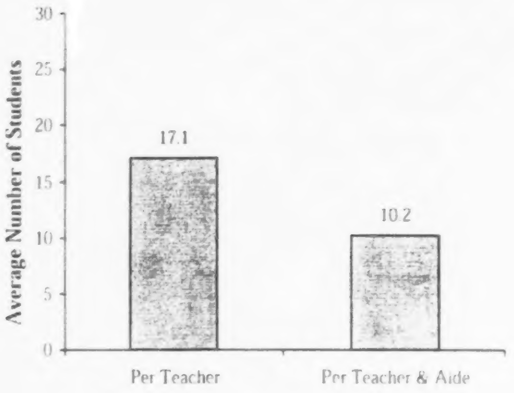
Numbers and Demographics
1998-1999



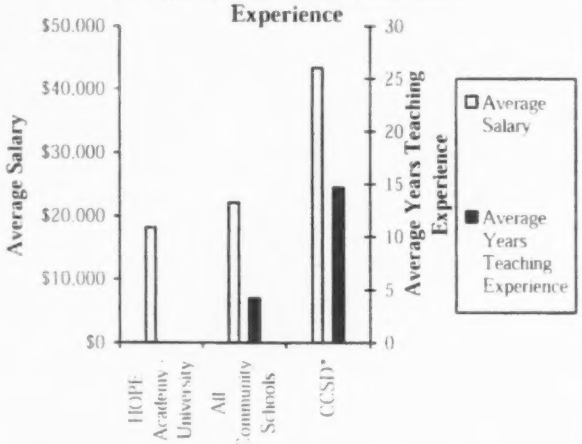
Race/Ethnicity



Enrollment by Grade



Students Per Teacher / Teacher & Aide



Average Teacher Salary and Years Experience

*These are the six Corresponding City School Districts.

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HOPE Academy – University Campus

Rationale for opening

- The school's founders felt that they can provide safe learning environments, offer quality educational programs, and demonstrate performance accountability in educating urban students. They believe that a business-like approach to educational planning is necessary for efficient and profitable operations. Because such planning is lacking in traditional public schools, those schools are unable to provide effective education in most urban settings.

Educational approach

- All schools operated by White Hat Management, Inc. use a competency-based education (CBE) approach. CBE includes detailed curricular goals that spell out student competencies across all subject areas, which are reflected in teachers' daily lesson plans. Pupil Performance Objectives (PPO) specify, for each student, the behavior to be achieved, the condition for demonstrating the behavior, and the criterion (or level) of competency by which the behavior is to be expressed.
- The competency-based approach is augmented by use of a computer-assisted instruction program (Jostens Learning®) that paces and monitors the progress of each student.

Distinctive characteristics

- Extensive use of computer-assisted instruction; uses Jostens Learning® lesson planning.
- A four-person governing board was convened by a for-profit management company (White Hat Management, Inc.), yet this board is to oversee the management company that runs this community school. This same board governs HOPE's Brown Street Campus in Akron.
- Of the 15 community schools, the teachers have the lowest salaries and are in the lowest third in terms of experience levels.
- Student enrollment is the smallest of the four HOPE community schools (137 in the 1998-1999 school year).

Future challenges

- Maintaining a business like approach to managing the school while adapting to the many problems faced by urban youth.
- Maintaining individualized approaches while striving to bring all students to acceptable levels of proficiency standards.
- Ensuring efficient and effective use of computer-augmented curriculum and lesson plans.

Annual report messages (Self-reported)

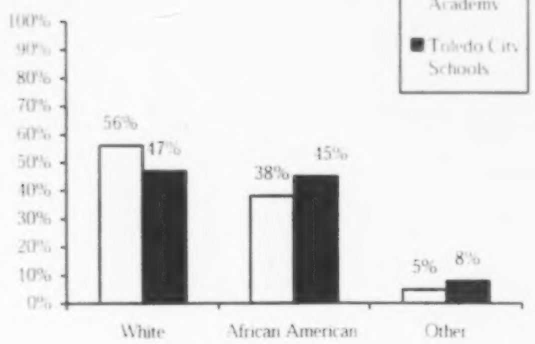
- A Pupil Education Plan was written for each student. This plan delineated an individual program for each student according to his/her ability, achievement, and needs.
- The results from the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills, WRAT Test, Ohio Proficiency Tests, and Comprehensive Assessment Test (Jostens Learning® computer test) were used to establish a baseline for each student. Fourth grade students took the Ohio Proficiency Tests.
- Students were given opportunities to enjoy success from self-exploratory behavior and participation in "active" learning.
- The school maintained an average daily attendance of 95.1%.

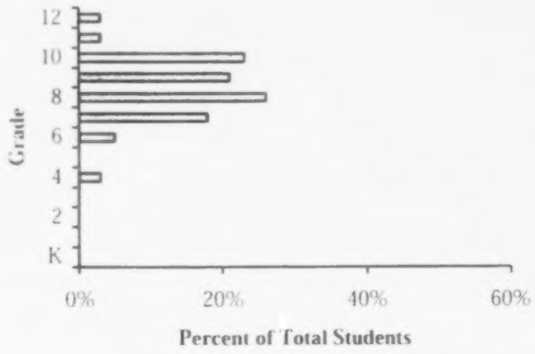
JADES Academy

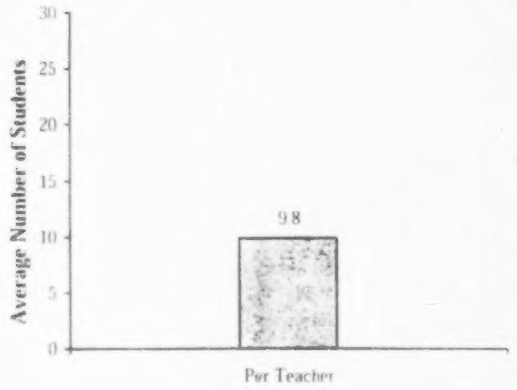
Basic Information

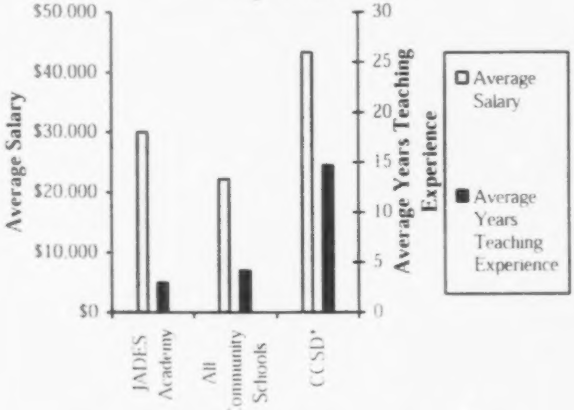
- **School name and address:** JADES Academy, 2740 West Central Avenue, Toledo, OH 43606
- **Director:** Sue Noll
- **Sponsor:** Lucas County Educational Service Center
- **Grade span and student enrollments:** 1998-1999 - grades 4, 6 - 12, 39 students; 1999-2000 - grades 3, 5 - 11, 53 students
- **Facility:** Sprawling, multi-acre, residential campus. The community school operates in several rooms in one of the buildings.
- **Governance:** The original five-person board consisted of university professor, community volunteer, Boysville of Michigan executive, businessperson, and Boysville, Inc. regional director. Two members have since resigned. Boysville of Michigan Inc. is the management company that operates this community school. The original principal, since resigned, did not sit on the board.
- **Ohio House and Senate Districts:** House - 52 Senate - 11

Numbers and Demographics
1998-1999


Race/Ethnicity


Enrollment by Grade


Students Per Teacher


Average Teacher Salary and Years Experience

*These are the six Corresponding City School Districts.

JADES Academy

Rationale for opening

- The community school legislation provided an opportunity to bolster the academic offerings provided to the court-adjudicated youth at this residential facility. Typically, youth placed in a residential facility by court order do not receive strong academic courses. These youth need extensive and multiple interventions to offset prior problems (often, with substance abuse) and to steer a course for productive adult lives.

Educational approach

- The classroom is seen as a "treatment unit" focusing on the multifaceted problems that these youth have experienced.
- The curriculum is similar to that used by Toledo City Schools.
- A major emphasis is placed on working on students' attitudes.

Distinctive characteristics

- Only community school that operates within a residential facility for adjudicated youth: students have multiple behavioral, substance abuse, and relationship problems.
- Typical adjudicated time in this residential facility is less than one year. Thus, this school is likely to have a different student body each school year.
- Students come to JADES Academy from throughout Ohio (22 school districts).

Future challenges

- Providing quality academic opportunities to transitory students; few will remain a second year.
- Operating a community school in a residential facility in which many other treatments and interventions are used to address the multiple problems faced by the students.
- Demonstrating progress on proficiency test scores.

Annual report messages (Self-reported)

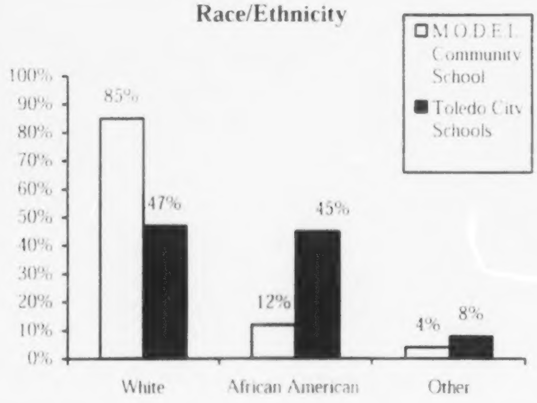
- JADES Academy did not submit an annual report in time for this analysis.

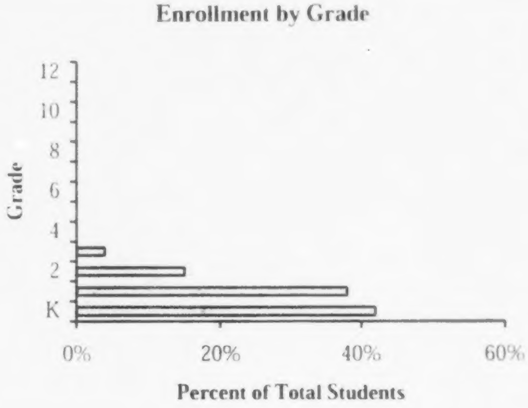
M.O.D.E.L. Community School

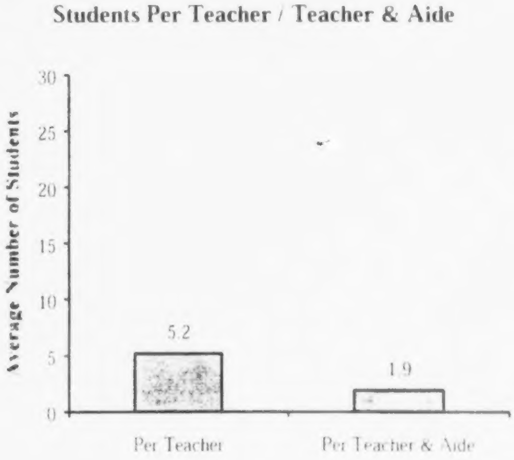
Basic Information

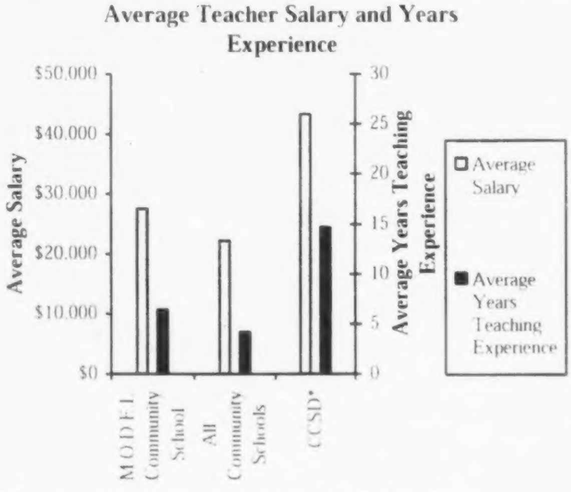
- **School name and address:** Multiple-Options for Developmental and Education Learning (M.O.D.E.L.) Community School, 1615 Holland Road, Maumee, OH 43537
- **Director:** Mary Walters
- **Sponsor:** Lucas County Educational Service Center
- **Grade span and student enrollments:** 1998-1999 - grades K – 3, 26 students; 1999-2000 - grades K - 3, 28 students
- **Facility:** A modern, one story office building located in Maumee, Ohio. Six office-sized rooms comprise the school.
- **Governance:** This school, serving only children with autism, has a seven-person board consisting of parents. The principal/director serves on the board; two of her children attend the school.
- **Ohio House and Senate Districts:** House - 53 Senate - 02

Numbers and Demographics
1998-1999


Race/Ethnicity


Enrollment by Grade


Students Per Teacher / Teacher & Aide


Average Teacher Salary and Years Experience

*These are the six Corresponding City School Districts.

M.O.D.E.L. Community School

Rationale for opening

- The community school legislation provided a unique and needed niche for serving autistic children in Lucas County. The founder, having two autistic children of her own, feels that the traditional public schools are ill equipped to deal with students having Autistic Spectrum Disorders. Parents of autistic children have very few viable treatment approaches available to them.

Educational approach

- A four-tiered approach is used in working with the autistic children. The intensity of intervention varies at each tier according to the student's level of functioning.
- Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) are used to specify each segment of each day for individual student's lessons with teacher and paraprofessional aides.
- Highly prescribed "therapy" sessions between teachers and students are used to help students gain new skills.

Distinctive characteristics

- Serves only students with Autistic Spectrum Disorders.
- Has lowest students to instructional staff (teachers plus aides) ratio of all community schools (1.9 to 1)
- IEPs define the objectives for every student – broken into several lesson/therapy sessions daily.
- Has smallest enrollment among the 15 community schools.

Future challenges

- Balancing increasing demand for more enrollment with the need to ensure continued intensity and quality of programming for autistic students.
- Maintaining the energy levels necessary to provide the intensive and expensive educational programming required for autistic students.
- Striving to help autistic students return to traditional public schools with the skill levels needed to succeed.

Annual report messages (Self-reported)

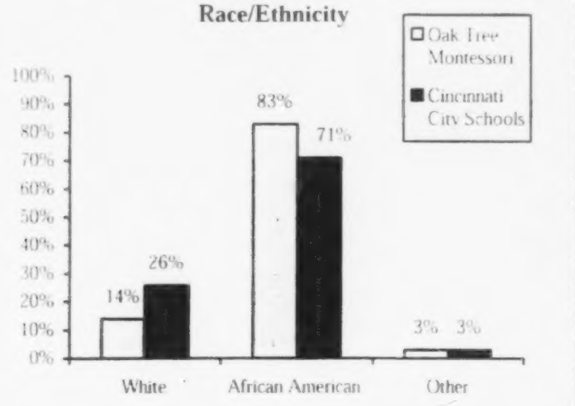
- All staff received a week of training prior to opening the school. Training included: The Picture Exchange Communication System, Division TEACH, Discrete Trial Training, CPR, first aid, seizure precautions, and therapeutic "holds" for safe intervention.
- Academic programming included The Earmark Reading Program, Tough Math, and Handwriting Without Tears.
- An adaptive swimming program for all students was initiated with the local chapter of the American Red Cross.
- Parents provided support for transportation needs, staff development needs, and attended training sessions to improve their understanding of their own children's needs.
- Through community feedback, the school is receiving requests for expansion in size and in grade levels, both preschool and higher grades.

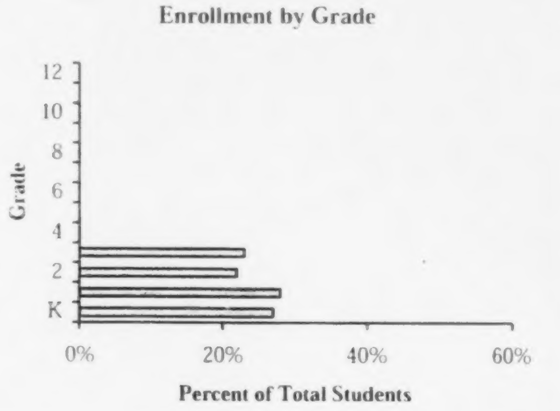
Oak Tree Montessori

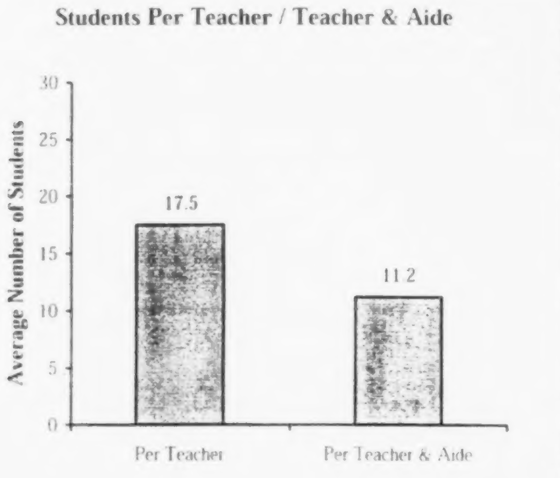
Basic Information

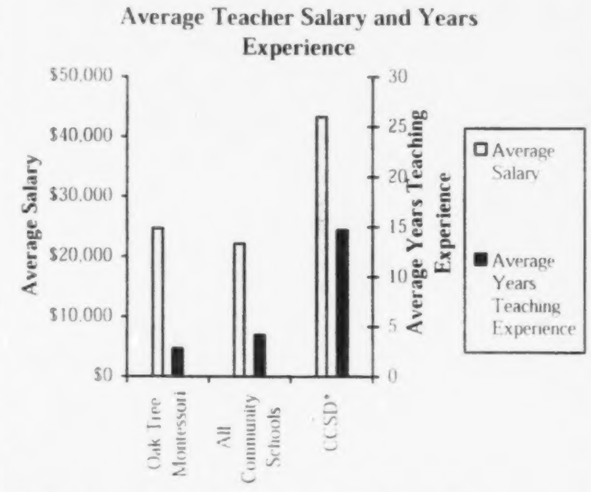
- **School name and address:** Oak Tree Montessori, 300 Lytle Street, Cincinnati, OH 45203
- **Director:** Pauline Childs
- **Sponsor:** State Board of Education
- **Grade span and student enrollments:** 1998-1999 - grades K - 3, 64 students; 1999-2000 - grades K - 3, (No EMIS submission on enrollment)
- **Facility:** First floor and basement of an older, hotel-type residence for women in downtown Cincinnati.
- **Governance:** Seven-member board includes the school's director, a parent, and five representatives of area businesses, media, and chamber of commerce.
- **Ohio House and Senate Districts:** House - 31 Senate - 9

Numbers and Demographics
1998-1999


Race/Ethnicity


Enrollment by Grade


Students Per Teacher / Teacher & Aide


Average Teacher Salary and Years Experience

*These are the six Corresponding City School Districts.

Oak Tree Montessori

Rationale for opening

- The founder and principal is a Montessori advocate and wanted to establish a quality early elementary school for working parents in a downtown setting. The community school legislation provided the opportunity to begin such a school. It was felt that urban students seldom have access to quality Montessori offerings in the traditional public school system.

Educational approach

- Employs Montessori teaching techniques with urban early elementary children who are unlikely to have had Montessori preschool experiences.
- Incorporates downtown environment into community learning opportunities.
- Encourages students to be actively involved and responsible for their own learning.

Distinctive characteristics

- Only Montessori community school catering to full range or students from a wide variety of ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds.
- Operates on lower floors of residential facility for women in need of respite care and housing.
- Seeks to provide choices to parents who work downtown.

Future challenges

- Adhering to principles and techniques of Montessori early childhood philosophy while recognizing that many of the students and parents are not accustomed to this approach.
- Using community resources as fully as possible.
- Seeking enrollments from a wide area of Cincinnati, despite the challenges of transportation, enrollment growth, and recruitment of qualified teachers.

Annual report messages (Self-reported)

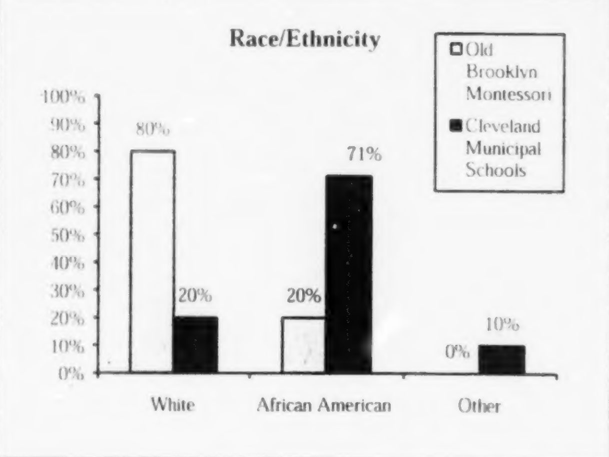
- During the week of May 10th, all kindergarten students took the Metropolitan Readiness Test. The first, second, and third grade students took the Terra Nova Tests (Terra Nova is the newer version of the California Achievement Test).
- The average daily attendance rate during the 1998-1999 school year was 97%. This far exceeded the school's goal of 93%.
- At the end of the first year, 72% of the kindergarten students returned for first grade. The school's goal was for a minimum of 70% of kindergarten students to continue at the school.
- This school provided an education based on the principles, philosophy, and techniques of Maria Montessori.
- The school made use of community resources to enhance academic instruction, including the downtown library, museum, and symphony.
- Parent and community involvement in volunteer work and at conferences, potlucks, and the third grade graduation/art show was exceptional.

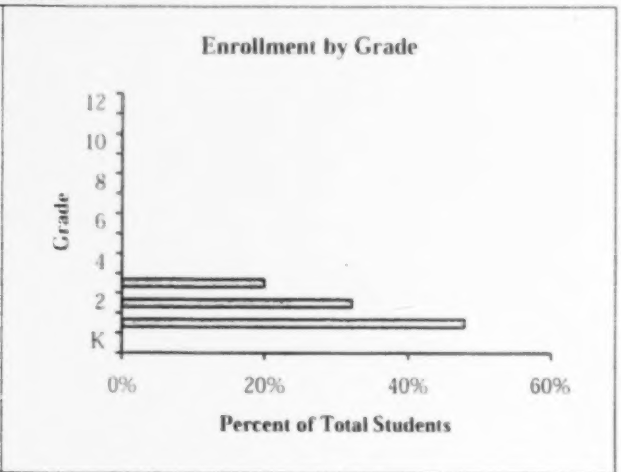
Old Brooklyn Montessori School

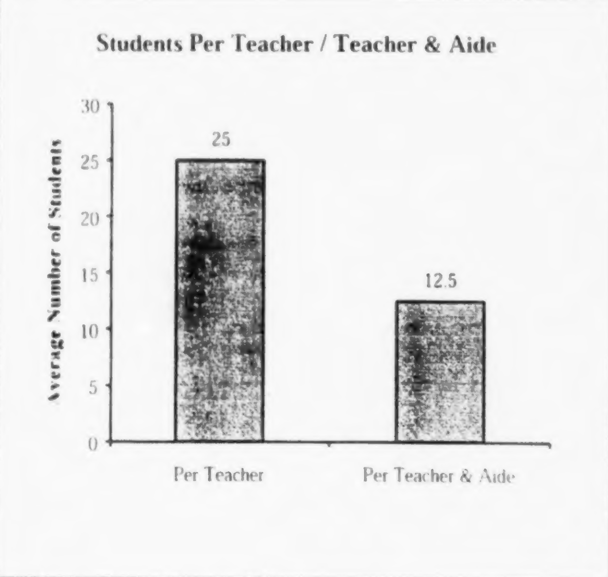
Basic Information

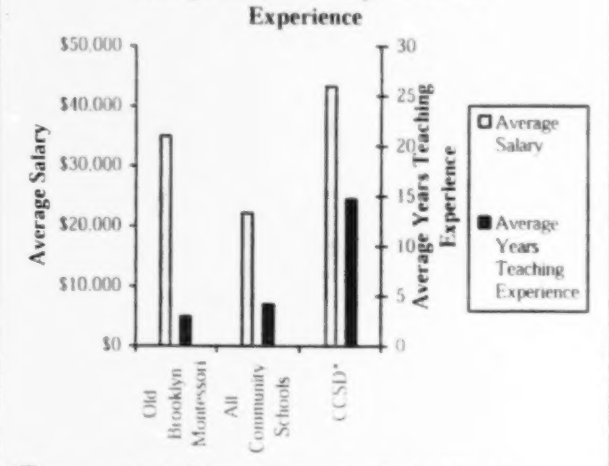
- **School name and address:** Old Brooklyn Montessori School, 4216 Pearl Road, Cleveland, OH 44109
- **Director:** Cherie Galjan
- **Sponsor:** State Board of Education
- **Grade span and student enrollments:** 1998-1999 - grades 1 - 3, 25 students; 1999-2000 - grades K - 4, 87 students
- **Facility:** One floor of old, but still active, church building, located in neighborhood several miles from downtown Cleveland.
- **Governance:** Six-person board made up of parents with children attending the school. The school's director (lead teacher) does not sit on the board.
- **Ohio House and Senate Districts:** House - 31 Senate - 9

Numbers and Demographics
1998-1999


Race/Ethnicity


Enrollment by Grade


Students Per Teacher / Teacher & Aide


Average Teacher Salary and Years Experience

*These are the six Corresponding City School Districts.

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Old Brooklyn Montessori School

Rationale for opening

- The founders believe that there are very few quality Montessori programs available in traditional public schools. Before community school legislation, parents had planned to start a private Montessori school for the early elementary grades. The community school legislation gave these parents the opportunity to establish a public Montessori early elementary school that would have the quality they sought.

Educational approach

- Adheres to principles and techniques of Maria Montessori's early childhood educational philosophy.
- Ensures that certified Montessori teachers provide leadership.

Distinctive characteristics

- Founded by parents to provide an opportunity for their children to receive Montessori schooling.
- Smallest school that is not a special needs community school.
- Except for two of the special needs schools, this school has the largest percentage of white students (80%); it is located in the city district with the lowest percentage of white students (20%).

Future challenges

- Ensuring that founding parents have choices for their children while maintaining open-enrollment policy for all Cleveland students.
- Expanding student enrollments while balancing the need to maintain a high quality Montessori educational program. (Relative to its size, this school has a large waiting list.)

Annual report messages (Self-reported)

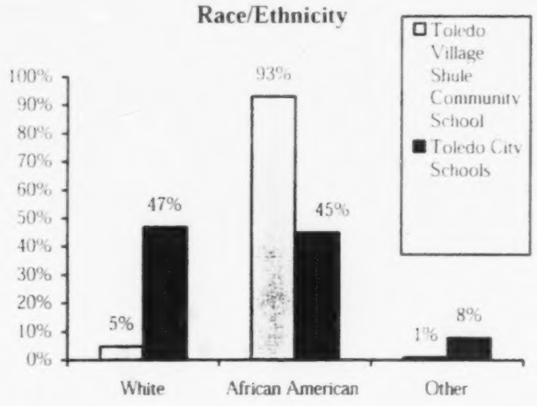
- The school maintained an overall student attendance rate of 90%.
- The school closed out the 1998-1999 school year with a positive cash balance in excess of $110,000, which will be used for capital improvements and to purchase classroom materials.
- The Stanford Achievement Tests were administered to all students for purposes of establishing a baseline.
- Classrooms had a 15 to 1 student to teacher ratio (30 students per classroom with one state-certified and Montessori trained teacher and one assistant teacher).
- The school made extensive use of community resources to supplement the traditional educational program (e.g., swimming at the YMCA, ice skating at the local Community Center, trips to the local MetroParks Zoo, and weekly trips to the local library).
- Parents and other community members volunteered on a daily basis.

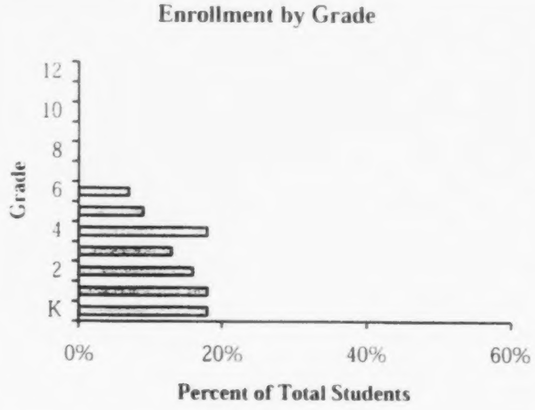
Toledo Village Shule Community School

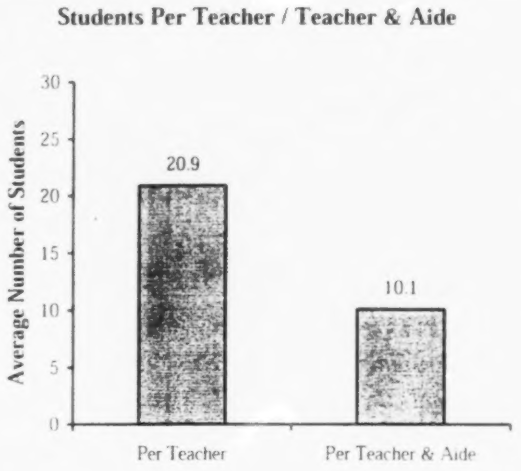
Basic Information

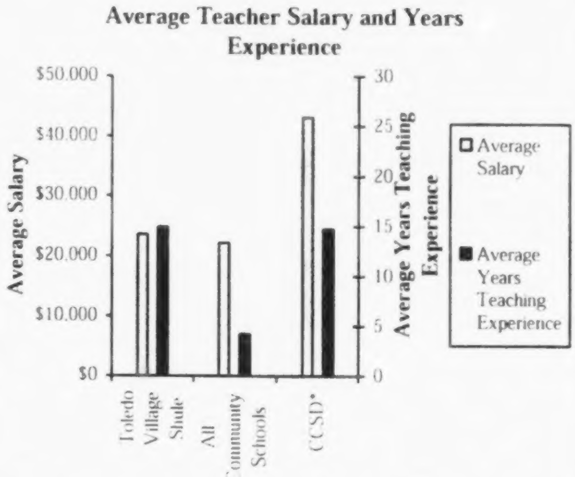
- **School name and address:** Toledo Village Shule Community School, 331 14th Street, Toledo, OH 43624
- **Director:** Gwendolyn Wilson
- **Sponsor:** Lucas County Educational Service Center
- **Grade span and student enrollments:** 1998-1999 - grades K - 6, 148 students; 1999-2000 - grades K - 6, 163 students
- **Facility:** Downtown office building, vacant before being leased to Village Shule.
- **Governance:** A ten-person board includes four university professors, an attorney, an architect, a community volunteer, a business person, and an art council representative. The school's founder and director sits on the board.
- **Ohio House and Senate Districts:** House - 49 Senate - 11

Numbers and Demographics
1998-1999


Race/Ethnicity


Enrollment by Grade


Students Per Teacher / Teacher & Aide


Average Teacher Salary and Years Experience

*These are the six Corresponding City School Districts.

Toledo Village Shule Community School

Rationale for opening

- The founder and director had a long-standing vision of opening a private school for poor, urban youth that would bring a "village" atmosphere to teaching and learning, but the tuition costs for the parents seemed prohibitive. The community school legislation was an attractive opportunity because, as a public school, it would be accessible to low-income parents. The school seeks to be flexible, student-centered and innovative – qualities felt to be lacking in traditional pubic schools in urban areas.

Educational approach

- Student-centered approach to learning; taking each child and finding viable learning options suited to his/her needs and styles.
- Flexibility in scheduling and providing options for students.
- Seeking opportunities for learning experiences as they arise in the classroom and in the community.
- Emphasis on cooperative and independent learning approaches; integration of dramatic arts, foreign language, and multiculturalism across subject areas.

Distinctive characteristics

- Flexibility and maintenance of a "child-centered" philosophy that adapts learning strategies to the needs and interests of the students.
- All students, even those in Kindergarten and first grade, rotate as a group from one teacher and classroom to another throughout the day.
- Year-round schooling and care for children before and after the regular school day.

Future challenges

- Maintaining student-centered learning approach in balance with rules and outcome expectations.
- Exercising flexibility and learning the best ways to operate a community school, while providing a stable environment for urban students.
- Integrating arts education, multiculturalism, and foreign language into the curriculum, while ensuring that students meet state proficiency standards.

Annual report messages (Self-reported)

- The school established a library of over 1,000 volumes.
- Four students won 1st prizes in the Toledo Symphony Showcase of the Arts.
- The school received a $150,000, three-year federal sub-grant to integrate arts education into the overall academic program.
- The school established an extended and year-round education program.
- A parent's group was established that provides volunteer services, including grant writing, fundraising, and coordinating transportation efforts for disadvantaged students.
- The school established both optimal and minimally acceptable goals for Ohio Proficiency Test scores for the next five years.

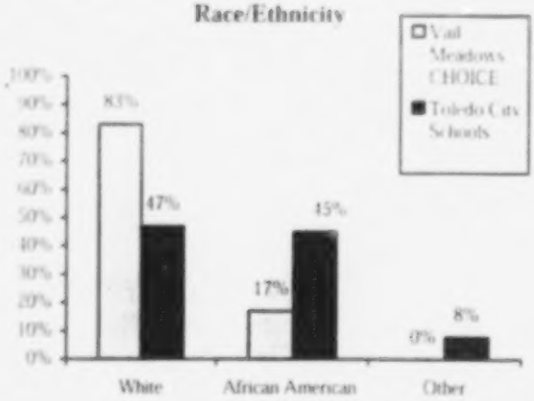
Vail Meadows CHOICE Community School

Basic Information

- **School name and address:** Vail Meadows CHOICE Community School. 6118 Cedar Point Road. Oregon. OH 43618
- **Director:** Carol Rense
- **Sponsor:** Lucas County Educational Service Center
- **Grade span and student enrollments:** 1998-1999 – ungraded. 29 students: 1999-2000 - ungraded. 39 students
- **Facility:** Classrooms are located in the front section of a newly constructed. indoor horse riding arena. The facility is located several miles east of Toledo's downtown area in Oregon. Ohio.
- **Governance:** Original six-person board (1998-1999 school year) consisted of four heath care and learning disability specialists. an instructor of criminal justice. and a sheriff's office official. Six additional members joined the board for the 1999-2000 school year. including the schools interim director – the third director since the school opened in 1998.
- **Ohio House and Senate Districts:** House - 53 Senate - 02

Numbers and Demographics
1998-1999

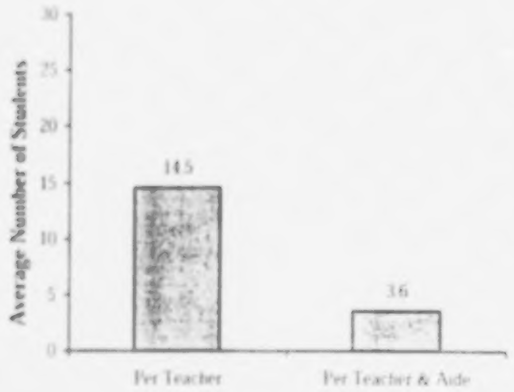
Race/Ethnicity



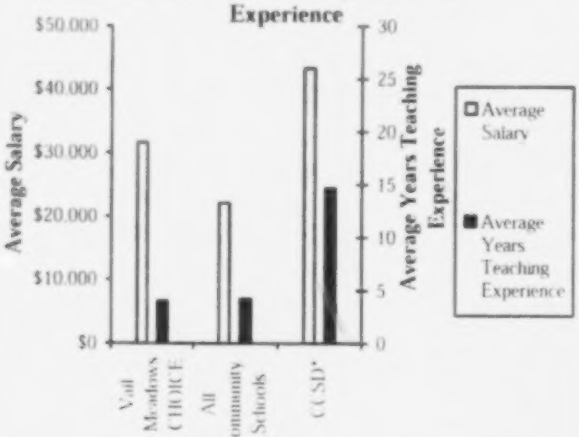
Enrollment by Grade

This school serves special needs students in approximately kindergarten to the eighth grade range. Due to the nature of the students' disabilities, these students are ungraded.

Students Per Teacher / Teacher & Aide



Average Teacher Salary and Years Experience



*These are the six Corresponding City School Districts.

Vail Meadows CHOICE Community School

Rationale for opening

- Founders believed that care for and riding of horses could be good therapy for students with learning disabilities or behavioral disabilities. Therapeutic riding centers (also called " Hippotherapy") operate throughout the U.S. and internationally. Since work was already in progress in building a private "riding therapy" arena and school, the community school legislation provided an opportunity to establish a public school for the same purpose. No traditional public school offers bold innovations such as "riding therapy" programs for youth with behavioral and learning disabilities.

Educational approach

- The school uses individualized and small group instruction, based on Individual Education Program (IEP) objectives that include academic subjects, pro-social behaviors and attitudes, and emotional and behavioral development through animal care.
- A primary goal is to prepare students to successfully return to a traditional public school environment.
- Emphasis on healthy expression of emotions through animal therapy, art, music, dance, drama and play.

Distinctive characteristics

- Incorporating school into existing horseback riding facility is unique among community schools.
- Students travel a long distance, from around the entire county, to attend this school.
- Founded on belief that the caring for and riding of horses is therapeutic for students with behavioral or learning disorders.

Future challenges

- Demonstrating that horse care and riding can benefit students with behavioral and leaning disabilities.
- Transporting small numbers of students from long distances.
- Maintaining a governance structure that recognizes community schools as a separate school entity, distinct from the existing family-run riding academy.

Annual report messages (Self-reported)

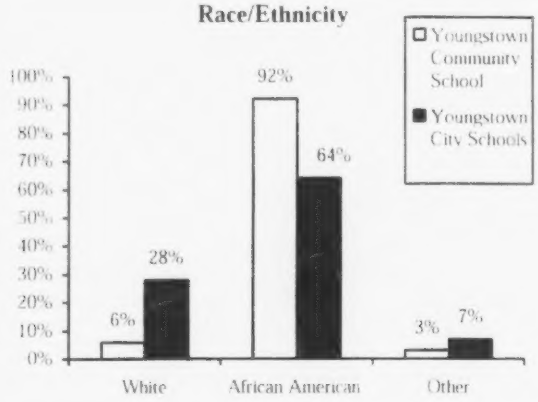
- 95% of parents attended two parent-teacher conferences to discuss their child's progress.
- Administered the Ohio Proficiency Tests to students in mandated grades.
- The school exceeded its enrollment goal (25 students) by five students for the 1998-1999 school year.
- An annual review of students Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) showed that most students had met or exceeded the majority of their goals.
- Ended the 1998-1999 school year with a budget surplus.

Youngstown Community School

Basic Information

- **School name and address:** Youngstown Community School. 44 Essex Street. Youngstown. OH 44502
- **Director:** Sister Mary Dunn
- **Sponsor:** State Board of Education
- **Grade span and student enrollments:** 1998-1999 - grade K. 36 students: 1999-2000 - grades K - 1. 80 students
- **Facility:** Modern. state-of-the-art. early childhood school: part of existing preschool facility: located near inner city Youngstown.
- **Governance:** Nine-member board consists of a retired teacher. parents. CPA. attorney. and a business person. The school's principal sits on the board as an ex-officio member. as does the executive director and director of the early childhood center in which the community school is located. Most of the board's members also sit on the board that governs the Mill Creek Children's Center – the preschool facility that houses the Youngstown Community School.
- **Ohio House and Senate Districts:** House - 64 Senate - 33

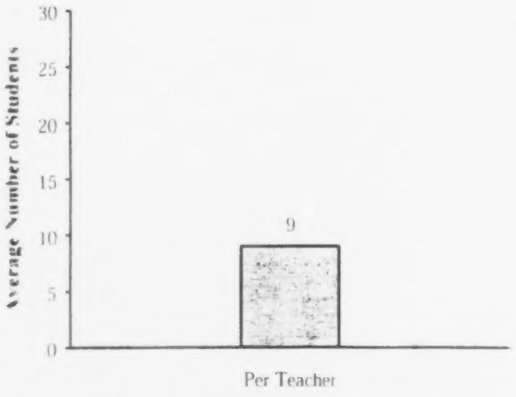
Numbers and Demographics
1998-1999



Race/Ethnicity

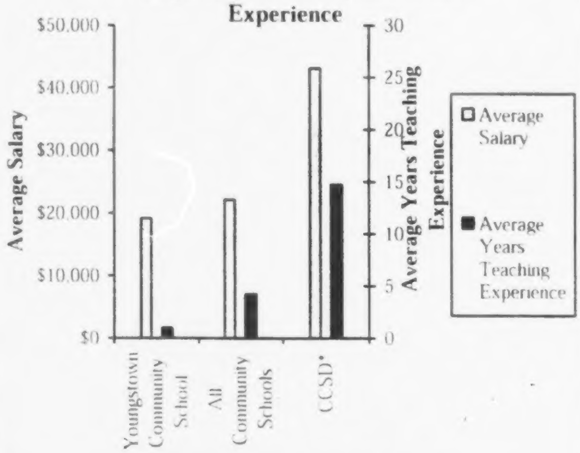
Enrollment by Grade

All students in this school were in kindergarten.



Students Per Teacher

Average Teacher Salary and Years Experience



*These are the six Corresponding City School Districts.

Youngstown Community School

Rationale for opening

- For over 20 years. Catholic nuns have operated a preschool (Mill Creek Children's Center) at this site. It has served poor, minority children from disadvantaged areas of Youngstown. The community school legislation allowed this school to begin offering early elementary programs for its preschool children. The founders believe that they can provide solid grounding in the basics, good discipline, a values-based approach to education and learning, and small class sizes – attributes they do not see in traditional public schools in urban areas.

Educational approach

- Incorporates values-based themes into curriculum; a different value is emphasized each month throughout the school The secular values include honesty, courage, "peaceability," self-reliance, self-discipline, loyalty, love, unselfishness, and kindness.
- Emphasis on discipline, highly structured lessons, and orderly classroom environments.
- Team teaching and individualized attention by using two certified teachers in each classroom.

Distinctive characteristics

- Lowest student per teacher ratio among community schools that are not special needs schools (9 students per teacher).
- Value-based curriculum.
- School is operated by Catholic nuns and is integrated (in terms of facility, curriculum, and governance) with a well-established preschool.
- Most modern and state-of-the-art educational facility of all community schools.
- Of the 15 community schools, the teachers are in the lowest third in experience and salary levels.

Future challenges

- Balancing desire to offer community school as an extension of existing preschool program with need to offer enrollment options to all parents in the local district.
- Continued growth in enrollment while maintaining quality and low student per teacher ratios.
- Finding funding options for new facilities and continuity of support. Plans are underway for considerable expansion to include a preschool and early elementary campus providing multiple services to parents and children.

Annual report messages (Self-reported)

- Eighty-nine percent of the kindergarten students achieved 80% or higher on teacher-constructed tests, quizzes, etc.
- The Metropolitan Readiness Test (Level 2) was given to all kindergarten students. The composite percentile was the 52nd with the average stanine of 5.
- Attendance rate for kindergarten students was 94.5%
- The school had a total student enrollment of 36 students with a 9:1 student to teacher ratio (there were two full-time, fully degreed teachers in each classroom).
- 100% of parents attended two scheduled parent-teacher conferences.
- The school received positive responses from a survey sent to parents.

Appendix E
Community Schools Operating during 1999-2000
Sorted by Location

Community School Name	Location	Sponsor	Grade Levels	Year of Operation		Number of Students*
				1st	2nd	
HOPE Academy Brown St. Campus	Akron	State Board of Education	K-8		•	270
HOPE Academy University Campus	Akron	State Board of Education	K-5		•	171
Life Skills Center of Akron	Akron	State Board of Education	9-12	•		243
Summit Academy Community School for Alternative Learners	Akron	State Board of Education	4-7	•		109
The Edge Academy	Akron	State Board of Education	K-3	•		102
Ida B. Wells Community School	Akron	State Board of Education	K-2	•		50
Harmony Community School	Cincinnati	State Board of Education	5-12		•	398
Oak Tree Montessori	Cincinnati	State Board of Education	K-3		•	**
Cincinnati College Preparatory Academy	Cincinnati	State Board of Education	K-6	•		**
Riverside Academy	Cincinnati	State Board of Education	K-6	•		337
Greater Cincinnati Community Academy	Cincinnati	State Board of Education	K-8	•		655
HOPE Academy Cathedral Campus	Cleveland	State Board of Education	K-7		•	413
HOPE Academy Chapelside Campus	Cleveland	State Board of Education	K-6		•	340
Old Brooklyn Montessori School	Cleveland	State Board of Education	1-4		•	87
The International Preparatory Academy	Cleveland	State Board of Education	K-12	•		**
Life Skills Center of Cleveland	Cleveland	State Board of Education	9-12	•		245
Horizon Science Academy Cleveland	Cleveland	State Board of Education	7-9	•		194
Cleveland Alternative Learning	Cleveland	State Board of Education	3-5	•		31
Citizen's Academy	Cleveland	State Board of Education	K-2	•		64
HOPE Academy Broadway Campus	Cleveland	State Board of Education	K-6	•		258
HOPE Academy Lincoln Park Campus	Cleveland	State Board of Education	K-6	•		151
Millennium Community School	Columbus	State Board of Education	K-4	•		377
Riser Military Academy	Columbus	State Board of Education	5-8	•		200
High Life Youth Education Center	Columbus	State Board of Education	7-12	•		186
Horizon Science Academy Columbus	Columbus	State Board of Education	7-9	•		**
Teresa A. Dowd School	Columbus	State Board of Education	K-5	•		63
City Day Community School	Dayton	State Board of Education	K-3		•	233

* As of October, 1999

** No enrollment data submitted as of October, 1999

Community School Name	Location	Sponsor	Grade Levels	Year of Operation		Number of Students*
				1st	2nd	
Dayton Urban Academy	Dayton	State Board of Education	K-8	●		167
Dayton Academy School (Edison Project)	Dayton	State Board of Education	K-12	●		624
Rhea Academy	Dayton	State Board of Education	K-5	●		63
Trade and Technology Prep.	Dayton	State Board of Education	9-12	●		161
Richard Allen Academy	Dayton	State Board of Education	K-12	●		113
WOW Accelerated Learning Academy	Dayton	Dayton Board of Education	K-6	●		199
Aurora Academy	Toledo	Lucas County Educational Service Center	K-12		●	230
JADES Academy	Toledo	Lucas County Educational Service Center	3-11		●	53
Vail Meadows CHOICE	Toledo Area	Lucas County Educational Service Center	Ungraded		●	39
M.O.D.E.L. Community School	Toledo Area	Lucas County Educational Service Center	K-3		●	28
Toledo Village Shule	Toledo	Lucas County Educational Service Center	K-6		●	163
Northwest Ohio Building Trades Academy	Toledo Area	Lucas County Educational Service Center	11-12	●		30
Toledo School for the Arts	Toledo	Toledo Board of Education	7-9	●		142
Performing Arts School for Metropolitan Toledo	Toledo	Lucas County Educational Service Center	7-12	●		136
P.A.S.S.	Toledo	Lucas County Educational Service Center	5-6	●		27
Toledo Academy of Learning	Toledo	Lucas County Educational Service Center	K-8	●		101
Academy of Business and Technology Community School	Toledo	University of Toledo	K-6	●		297
Monroe Academy	Toledo	Lucas County Educational Service Center	K-6	●		**
Eagle Heights Academy	Youngstown	State Board of Education	K-7		●	715
Youngstown Community School	Youngstown	State Board of Education	K		●	80
Life Skills Center of Youngstown	Youngstown	State Board of Education	9-12	●		112
TOTAL				33	15	8.657

* As of October. 1999

** No enrollment data submitted as of October. 1999

Appendix F
Community School Characteristics

Race and Ethnicity

District/Community School Name	Total Students	African American	White	Other*
Akron City	**31,996**	**47%**	**50%**	**3%**
HOPE Academy Brown Street Campus	248	57%	39%	4%
HOPE Academy University Campus	137	86%	9%	4%
Cincinnati City	**49,574**	**71%**	**26%**	**3%**
Harmony Community School	201	67%	28%	4%
Oak Tree Montessori	64	83%	14%	3%
Cleveland City	**76,559**	**71%**	**20%**	**10%**
HOPE Academy Cathedral Campus	319	99%	0%	0%
HOPE Academy Chapelside Campus	296	100%	0%	0%
Old Brooklyn Montessori School	25	20%	80%	0%
Dayton City	**25,865**	**70%**	**28%**	**2%**
City Day Community School	56	98%	2%	0%
Toledo City	**39,101**	**45%**	**47%**	**8%**
Aurora Academy	85	34%	45%	21%
JADES Academy**	39	38%	56%	5%
M.O.D.E.L. Community School**	26	12%	85%	4%
Toledo Village Shule	148	93%	5%	1%
Vail Meadows CHOICE**	29	17%	83%	0%
Youngstown City	**11,540**	**64%**	**28%**	**7%**
Eagle Heights Academy	623	90%	4%	6%
Youngstown Community School	36	92%	6%	3%

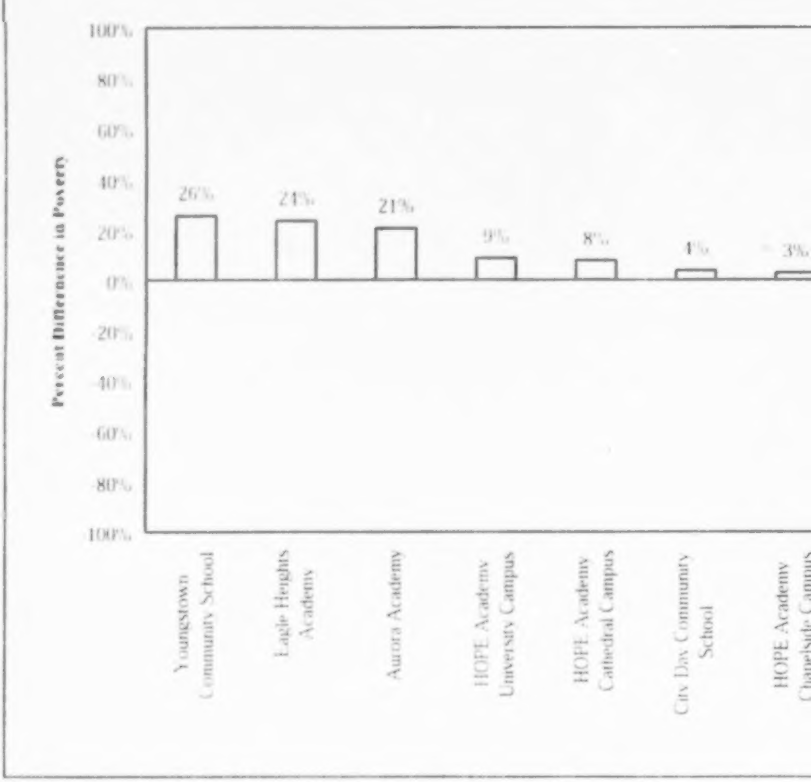
Corresponding City School Districts (N=6)	234,635	63%	31%	6%
Community Schools (N=15)	2,332	82%	15%	4%

* The "other" category includes students classified as : Hispanic, Asian or Pacific Islander, American Indian or Alaskan Native, or Multicultural.

** Denotes special needs school

Source: EMIS ADM Control File, October, 1998

Difference in Proportion of
Community Schools and Corr
1998-1999



* Denotes special needs schools

Source: Ohio Department of Education, Office of Federal Assistance

This graph compares the difference in the proportion of students in poverty f
the one extreme, the proportion of students in poverty at Youngstown Community S
other extreme, the proportion of students at Old Brooklyn Montessori is 23 percenta
Schools. Only three community schools (Old Brooklyn Montessori, M.O.D.E.L., ar
city district counterpart.

The statistics used to generate these comparisons are based on a combin
Academy is not included in this analysis because it did not participate in the free and re

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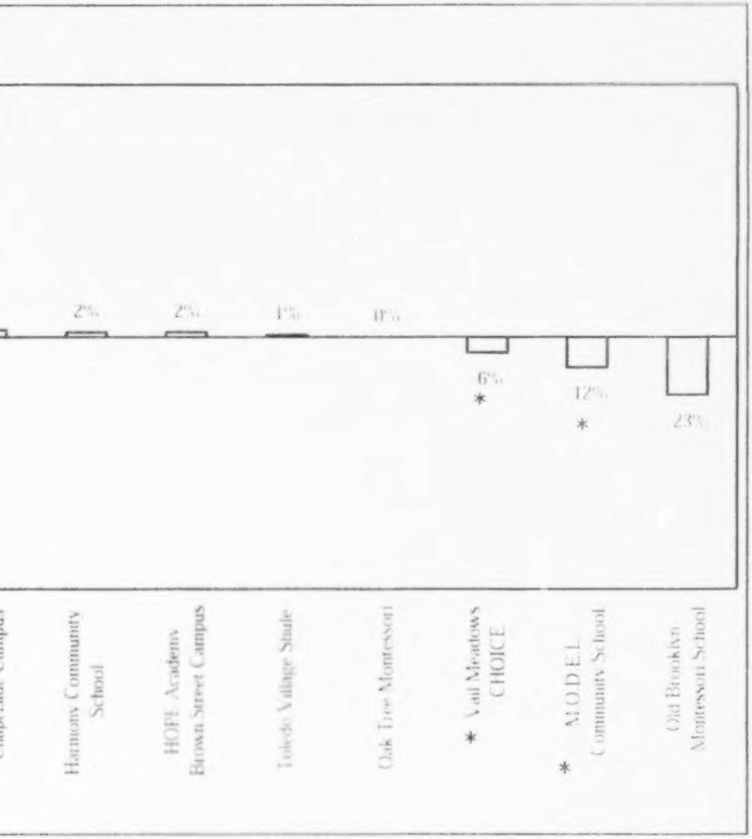
Students in Poverty between
esponding City School Districts
School Year



for each community school and its corresponding city school district. For example, at School is 26 percentage points higher than that of Youngstown City Schools. At the age points lower than that of its city school district counterpart, Cleveland Municipal nd Vail Meadows CHOICE) had a lower proportion of students in poverty than their

nation of federal census figures and free and reduced-price lunch counts. JADES educed-price lunch program.

LABLE

Disability Condition

District/Community School Name	Total Student Population	Percent with Disabilities
Akron City	**31,996**	**12%**
HOPE Academy Brown Street Campus	248	0%
HOPE Academy University Campus	137	0%
Cincinnati City	**49,574**	**12%**
Harmony Community School	201	14%
Oak Tree Montessori	64	3%
Cleveland City	**76,559**	**13%**
HOPE Academy Cathedral Campus	319	0%
HOPE Academy Chapelside Campus	296	0%
Old Brooklyn Montessori School	25	0%
Dayton City	**25,865**	**13%**
City Day Community School	56	0%
Toledo City	**39,101**	**14%**
Aurora Academy	85	20%
The JADES Academy*	39	77%
M.O.D.E.L. Community School*	26	100%
Toledo Village Shule Community	148	8%
Vail Meadows CHOICE*	29	100%
Youngstown City	**11,540**	**17%**
Eagle Heights Academy	623	1%
Youngstown Community School	36	0%

Corresponding City School Districts (N=6)	234,635	13%
Community Schools (N=15)	2,332	6%

* Denotes special needs schools

Source: EMIS ADM Control File, October, 1998

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Average Annual Teacher Salary
(listed lowest to highest)

Community School Name	Average Annual Salary
HOPE Academy University Campus	$18,040
HOPE Academy Chapelside Campus	$18,500
HOPE Academy Brown Street Campus	$18,833
Youngstown Community School	$18,900
HOPE Academy Cathedral Campus	$19,000
Eagle Heights Academy	$19,138
Aurora Academy	$20,636
Toledo Village Shule	$23,677
Oak Tree Montessori	$24,507
M.O.D.E.L. Community School*	$27,412
Harmony Community School	$28,361
JADES Academy*	$29,762
Vail Meadows CHOICE*	$31,500
Old Brooklyn Montessori School	$35,000
City Day Community School	$45,250

Community Schools (N=15)	$22,070

* Denotes special needs schools
Source: EMIS Staff Employment File, October, 1998

Average Years Teaching Experience
(listed least to greatest)

Community School Name	Years Teaching Experience
HOPE Academy Brown Street Campus	0.0
HOPE Academy University Campus	0.0
Youngstown Community School	1.0
Harmony Community School	1.1
Aurora Academy	1.4
HOPE Academy Chapelside Campus	1.9
Oak Tree Montessori	2.8
JADES Academy*	3.0
Old Brooklyn Montessori School	3.0
Vail Meadows CHOICE*	4.0
HOPE Academy Cathedral Campus	4.4
Eagle Heights Academy	4.8
M.O.D.E.L. Community School*	6.4
Toledo Village Shule	14.9
City Day Community School	27.0

Community Schools (N-15)	4.2

* Denotes special needs schools
Source: EMIS Staff Employment File, October, 1998

Comments

Agency Comments

- **The Ohio Community School Center**

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Monday April 10, 2000

Comments on the first-year community school implementation report by the Legislative Office of Education Oversight

The Ohio Community School Center (OCSC) is very grateful to be able to comment on the *First-Year Implementation Report* on community schools in Ohio (Report) complied by the Legislative Office of Oversight (LOEO).

OCSC, in support of strong accountability measures for all public schools, has been supportive of LOEO's community school study and believes that it will make a substantial contribution to the public's knowledge of the program. As a non-partisan research arm of the General Assembly, LOEO will also inform the General Assembly on important issues related to the community school program.

In the coming years, OCSC believes that future LOEO reports on community schools, including its comprehensive three and five-year studies of the program will become part of the larger accountability system for community schools.

Although, taken as a whole, OCSC has no major disagreement with the study, OCSC would like to elaborate on some of the Report's findings and, where necessary, provide some supplementary analysis.

General Comments:

- OCSC joins the Report in emphasizing that the Report is only a first-year report--the first of many reports to follow. As such, all of its findings, both those that could be perceived as "negative," and those that could be perceived as "positive," are contingent upon verification by future studies. Despite this fact, however, this Report's findings will form the basis upon which future reports will be compared.
- This early data indicate that community schools in Ohio are performing as they were intended to perform. They are focused on needy populations of students, designed to address local

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educational needs using innovative methods, and attractive to students and parents who may not have been satisfied in their prior academic setting.

- OCSC agrees that the first year of the program faced many obstacles, but that many of these obstacles have been addressed, at least in part, by those involved in the program.

- OCSC also joins the Report in support of immediate improvements in the areas of accountability (specifically, the annual reports) and transportation.

Chapter I: Introduction

- Although the Report highlights some of the philosophies that support community schools, known nationally as charter schools (Report, 1), it did not adequately explain the concept of choice.

  Choice operates from the assumption that public education should be "child centered," rather than "district centered." This means that, to the greatest extent possible, children and their parents should be the focus of decisions, both at the state and the local level. Because charter schools are public schools of choice--meaning that no child or teacher is every assigned to a charter school, charter schools that are not laser-focused on serving children and responsive to their needs will not maintain their enrollment and will close.

  By organizing the school system around the choices of parents and students--the consumers of public education--local public schools would maximize their academic strengths, their ability to create safe, desirable learning environments, and their willingness to be responsive to the needs of parents.

Chapter II: The Origins of Community Schools in Ohio

- In its outline of the legislative history of community schools, the Report overlooked the significant differences between the Ohio charter school program and that of other states.

  Though there are some technical differences surrounding funding, chartering processes, and transportation, the largest difference is that of function. With the expansion of the program in HB 282 to districts in "academic emergency," Ohio's community school program became specifically focused on raising student achievement and providing more educational choices within the public system to parents and students in Ohio's urban and low-performing districts.

  School district report card data indicate that almost three out of every ten students are enrolled in emergency districts.

  This function is in keeping with the ideals of "child centered" public education. Although the General Assembly has instituted strong accountability measures for school districts--including, now, the "threat" of competition from charter schools in chronically low-performing districts, the community school program itself has a more direct and immediate impact on parents and students. In his 1999 State of the State, Gov. Taft specifically stated that he wished to expand the program to provide choices within the public system for parents and students in these areas of the state.

Given the various "performance gaps" that exist both among and within these districts, Ohio's charter school program has been given a very unique and challenging task--to help raise student achievement in Ohio's neediest areas. All other charter school laws across the country have a statewide application. Ohio is very unique in that its charter school program is specifically targeted at the areas where the "consumers" of public education would most benefit from having access to a greater number of high-quality public schools.

- The Report very appropriately and correctly noted that community schools are ***public*** schools--adding that should not be classified as "quasi public" (Report, 6).

- Though the report outlined several areas of community school accountability, it failed to notice that Ohio's system of community school accountability also includes statewide assessments of the program as a whole. The three and five-year evaluations currently in progress at LOEO are an important piece of this accountability system (Report, 8).

- The Report also failed to noted that the "contract renewal and termination" and "parental choice" components of the community school accountability system do not apply to traditional schools districts. The possibility of ***closure***, seen by many as the ultimate accountability tool, is not sufficiently emphasized in the Report. Though these accountability measures arguably generate stronger incentives that other accountability tools, districts are wholly exempt from them.

Chapter III: Characteristics of Ohio's First Community Schools

- Nationwide, approximately one third of all charter schools are "conversion" schools, yet Ohio had none its first year, and subsequent years have seen barely a few. Though it would be premature to offer any reliable explanation for this phenomena, it warrants some research in future LOEO reports.

- Similarly, on a national scale, over forty percent of charter schools are sponsored by local school districts. Yet in Ohio, none did in the first year and only few have since.

- Although the Report does not directly reach this conclusion, the evidence found in this chapter and elsewhere in the report clearly indicates that Ohio's community school program is working as intended by focusing its attention on students with the greatest needs. This is seen in the developers' stated reasons for starting schools, the focus of their missions, their student enrollments, and their initial performance evaluations of students.

- The evidence in this chapter also indicates that community schools in Ohio conform to most national norms--where an increased focus on academic outcomes, individualized learning, parent participation, and meeting unmet educational needs are the most common reasons for opening charter schools.

- The Report clearly indicates that community schools enroll more minorities and more low-income students than their surrounding local districts (Report 17). This again demonstrates how the program is working as intended--to help the most "at risk" populations of students. That there is no "skimming" of the wealthier students is to be expected (though, as the report suggests, "skimming" is largely a myth anyway).

- The Report also noted that most community schools had waiting lists--some had lists that were several hundred students long. This indicates a strong demand for the program and a strong desire among parents for more choices within the public system.

- The Report looks closely at the characteristics of teachers in community schools. It notes that, on average, community school teachers were less experienced and received less pay than district teachers. This information, however, was presented in a vacuum. Though it would be premature to offers definitive explanations for this fact, several may include:

  1. Community schools simply do not have the financial resources with which to recruit "the best" teachers while meeting local pay scales.
  2. Many experienced teachers have too much invested in their current positions to make a radical career change.
  3. The educational marketplace in many districts may not accommodate large shifts in teacher populations.
  4. Many of the least experienced and least well-paid teachers were localized in only a few individual community schools.

- It is important to note as well, that community schools are schools of choice for teachers as well for parents. No teacher is forced to work at one. When presenting information about the working environment of teachers in community schools, LOEO should note that they have this choice. One of the ideas behind charter schools is that teachers know what's best for themselves and should have the freedom of work in, or even establish, a school that matches their educational philosophies.

Chapter IV: Findings

- The Report does a commendable job of outlining issues related to funding, transportation, facilities, and technical assistance. It is important to note, however, that several private sources of technical assistance are now available to community schools. These include OCSC, the Dayton-based Alliance for Education, and others.

- Like LOEO, OCSC believes that an immediate solution to the ongoing transportation situation regarding community schools needs to be found. OCSC hopes that LOEO may feel equally as strongly in future reports about solving the other, arguably larger, logistical issue facing community schools--facilities financing.

- In looking at accountability, the Report correctly noted that the program had not been in existence long enough for most forms of community school accountability to take effect (Report, 33). However, some minor clarifications are necessary regarding the Report's findings:

  1. Choice is not just about waiting lists. Choice is also about parents "voting with their feet." What is evident from other data in the Report is that some parents are concluding that their community school did not adequately serve the needs of their children. This is very healthy, showing that parents are active and engaged education "consumers." This realization can be a very powerful incentive on schools to improve. No analysis of how community schools have responded to parent choice has taken place. (It is worth noting that the exercise of parental choice was pivotal in the closure of a community school in early 2000.)

2. To some degree, there is little that can be done to alleviate the "variety" found in community school annual reports. On a whole, Ohio's community schools are very diverse, with distinct missions, goals, populations, and outcomes. This fact will always make it difficult for LOEO to "interpret" the reports. Indeed, given the differences among schools, comparison analyses will always be difficult to make.

Chapter V: Conclusions and Recommendations:

- OCSC strongly supports the Report's recommendations as they pertain to transportation and accountability. OCSC shares its concern over these two very important issues. OCSC believes that the Report makes very sensible and necessary recommendations. OCSC would like to point out however, that the Office of School Options within the Department of Education has already taken great strides forward in alleviating the shortcomings found in this first year's annual reports.

Conclusion:

In summary, this first-year report demonstrates that, though the program has been beset by several obstacles, it has emerged as a viable complement to the traditional public system in the shared goal of meeting the needs of Ohio's children. Progress, however, has been made on many of these issues, and OCSC looks forward to future improvement in the program's implementation.